

THE NEW STANDARD

ANIMENOMINOUS!

NUMBER 2

\$3.75 AUTUMN 1990

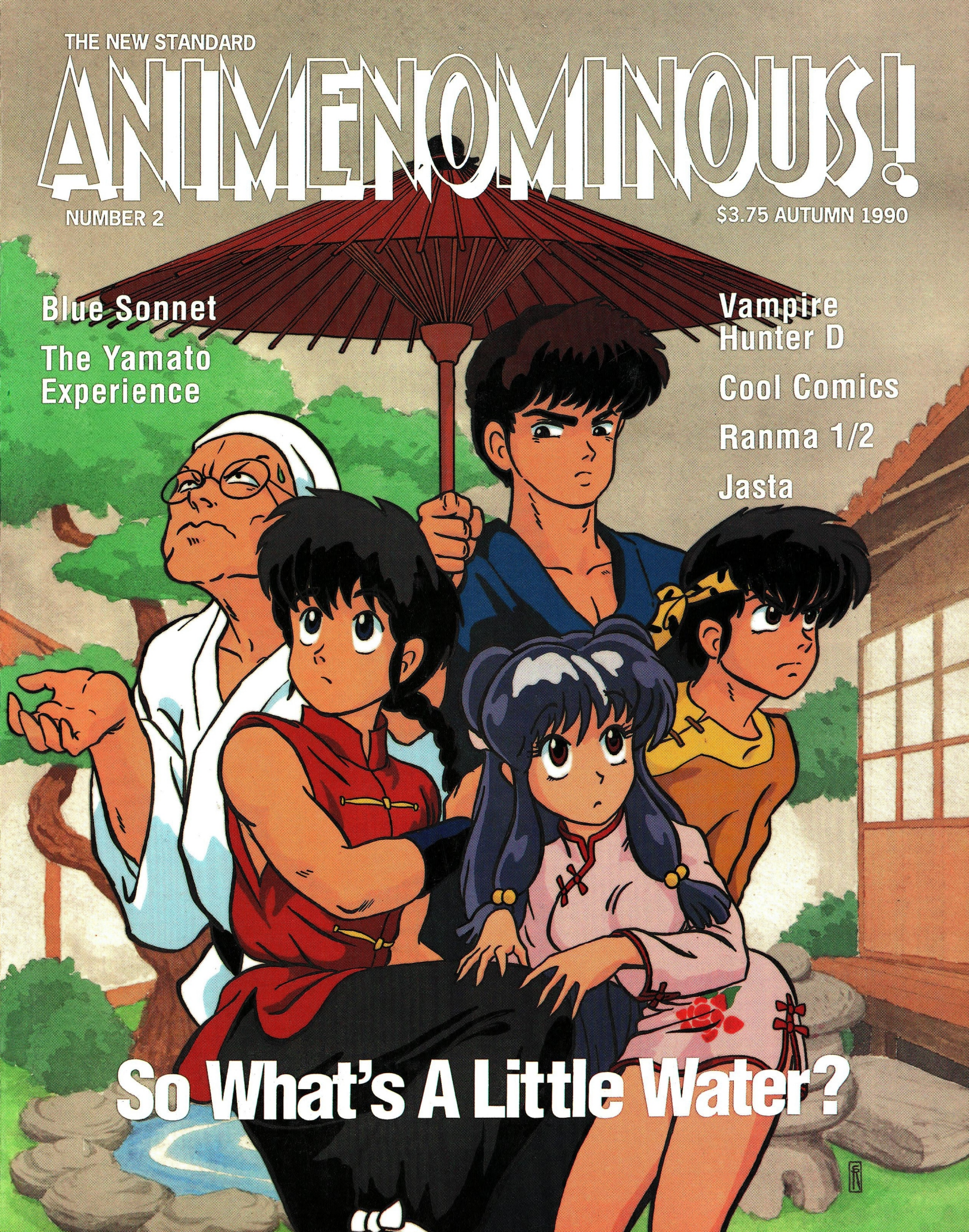
Blue Sonnet
The Yamato
Experience

Vampire
Hunter D

Cool Comics

Ranma 1/2

Jasta



So What's A Little Water?

Can you believe that it's time again for another issue? Well, all we can say is that this time was a bit easier for us than the last...the entire staff was pulling all-nighters for the last two months before issue one's release. Still, we feel that the results were worth it. And, some of the kinks got ironed out for this issue, so the hopefully the problems that crept into issue one won't find their way into this one.

Overall, the letters that we received were quite supportive of our little venture. You can read a few of them in our newly-introduced letter page "Mimi Mail" on page 28. Also new this time around is the promised CD Review column. Oh yes, on the subject of Animimi. You'll be seeing more of her. She's Miss Animenominous, 1990. When the time comes, you'll all have the opportunity to vote for the contestant of your choice for Miss Animenominous, 1991. Stay tuned.

The question that we've gotten asked the most since we started to publish this is just exactly where tapes of the stuff can be gotten. Well folks, this is where it gets a little difficult. Were you to go out and buy prerecorded tapes of these, the cost would start around \$50 EACH. LaserVision is the better deal, but those too can run over \$100 without a great deal of trying. While we can't condone the practice, a great deal of the circulation of the material comes from

having a network of friends who share copies of the programming. Some less scrupulous people have even carved out a living for themselves by selling copies of material for profit. While both these practices are technically illegal, we'd suggest that you look for folks who copy for free before paying someone to do it for you. Comic shops and computer bulletin board systems seem to

be good places to start looking, as well as former chapters of the extinct national C/FO organization. If you do decide that paying for tape is the only way to get material, you shouldn't have to pay more than \$20 for two hours.

That's it for this time. Read on...

CORRECTION: In the first issue, the wrong term was used to describe Madoka Ayukawa (Take me to Summer Side: Kimagure Orange Road) The more correct term is "Ai no ko", which translates to "Love Child". The other term is a much more strong one. It didn't look right to us either, but the author assured us that it was correct, and time didn't permit us to triple check. Thanks to all the folks who wrote in and make the correction.





NO, THEY'RE NOT RECORDS	2
RANMA 1/2	7
COOL COMICS	13
BLUE SONNET	16
THE YAMATO EXPERIENCE	21
CD REVIEWS	24
VAMPIRE HUNTER D	26
MIMI MAIL	28
JASTA	29

NEWS

Toshihiro Hirano strikes again! The newest installment of the **Iczer** series debuts September 25, and is called **Adventure! Iczer 3**. The series of three made for tape productions features Kazumi Nagisa (Kanow Nagisa's direct descendant), Iczer One, and the new character of Iczer Three. It seems

that Big Gold's own descendant (Neo Gold) is out trashing the solar system once again. The LaserVision disc for part 1 arrives on October 25.



U.S. Renditions has announced the next four parts in it's series of English subtitled products. The next two, released more or less simultaneously, will be the Part Two of the **Gunbuster** Trilogy and Shiro Masamune's **Appleseed**. The second group will be the concluding chapter of **Gunbuster**, and Masamune's **Black Magic: M-66**.

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NO, THEY'RE NOT RECORDS



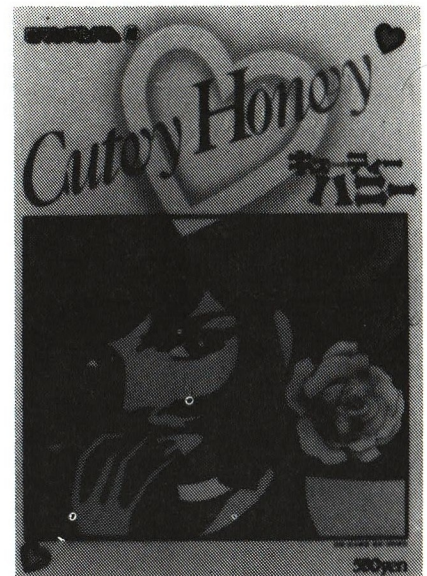
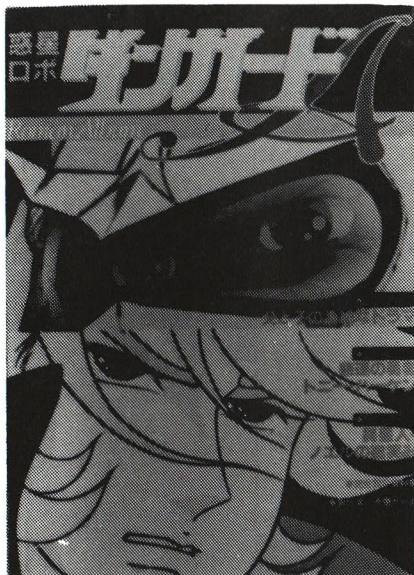
Roman Album

is the generic term for a series of magazine sized soft covered books printed by Tokuma Shoten. The term "Roman Album" is generally believed to

derive from (ROMAN)ce adventure ALBUM (volume). While the term implies lp record, these are strictly books. It was these books that were the standard reference for many years, and were prized above most others. Now largely replaced by the newer "Art Of" series, these are still often the best reference for many older tv series and movies.

The birth of the Roman Album coincided with the rebirth of television animation. The first, of course, was *Space Cruiser Yamato* (tv). Compared to later works, this is inferior with many questionable

ROMAN ALBUM

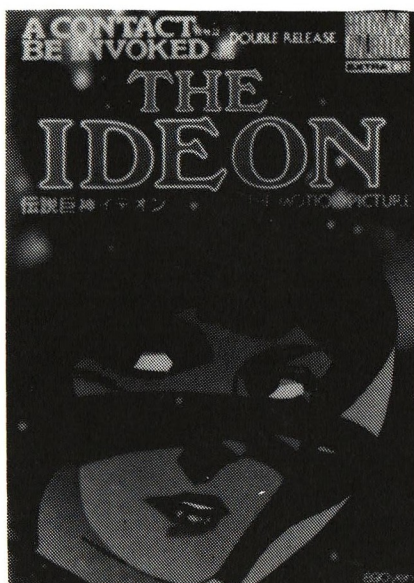


paintings done specifically for the book rather than using the original art. As later albums were released, more and more of the original panels were used and these were some of the nicest things from the period.

If one was to pick a single element about Roman Albums that set them apart from their very worthy competition (like "This Is Animation", "Fantastic Collection", and Keibunsha's "Dai Hyakka"), it would most certainly be their cover design. The artists consistently made shows that the average fan wouldn't give a second look at appear worthwhile. There was no formula that is so evident in other publications, and the staff was not afraid to take risks. Every release became a new experience; fans never knew what was coming next. All anyone was sure of was that the next one would be interesting.

While the subjects read like a who's who of animation, there are some curious omissions. There is no *Science Ninja Team Gatchaman* Roman Album for any of its three seasons. There is no *Urusei Yatsura* Roman Album. There is no *Lupin the Third* Roman Album for any of its three seasons. There is no *Macross* Roman Album. There is no *Saint Seiya* Roman Album. All of these would probably have people standing in line to buy them, yet Tokuma Shoten decided for some unexplained reason not to produce them. Perhaps the most logical explanation offered for these startling oversights is a question of licensing, but that's still only an educated guess.

ROMAN /ALBUM



While the output has certainly slackened over the last few years, these are still being produced. As of this writing, the three most recent releases were Hayao Miyazaki's *Laputa* (#68), *Totoro of the Neighborhood* (#69) and *Kiki's Delivery Service* (#70). Mr. Miyazaki's work seems to be covered in quite a bit of depth as there are volumes for most of it (with the exception of *Cagliostro Castle: Lupin the Third*).

Current market price on some of these can run into considerable amounts of money, so if you see one that you like sitting on a table somewhere, ask the price first. If it's a fairly recent book, you shouldn't have to pay more than \$15. Older ones can easily run over \$50 and many of the most



ROMAN ALBUM

ROMAN ALBUMS TO DATE

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1.Uchu Senkan Yamato | 38.Marco Polo |
| 2.Cyborg 009 | 39.Cyborg 009: Legend of Super Galaxy (movie) |
| 3.Rainbow Sentai Robin | 40.Cutey Honey |
| 4.Devilman | 41.Wanpaku Kum Kum |
| 5.Tiger Mask | 42.Mobile Suit Gundam (movie) |
| 6.Super Jetter | 43.Yamato 3 |
| 7.Tetsuwan Atom (Astro Boy) | 44.Mobile Suit Gundam 2 (movie) |
| 8.Brave Raideen | 45.Adieu Galaxy Express 999 |
| 9.Mazinger Z (Tranzor Z) | 46.Future Boy Conen |
| 10.Kamui | 47.Baldios |
| 11.Arrivederci Yamato | 48.The Ideon |
| 12.Banderbook | 49.Queen Millennia (movie) |
| 13.Tomorrow's Joe | 50.Mobile Suit Gundam 3 (movie) |
| 14.Voltus V | 51.Ideon: A Contact/Be Invoked |
| 15.Grandizer | 52.Captain Harlock: My Youth in Arcadia |
| 16.Combattler V | 53.Space Cruiser Yamato: Perfect Manual 1 |
| 17.Eight Man | 54.Space Cruiser Yamato: Perfect Manual 2 |
| 18.Dangard Ace | 55.Godmars |
| 19.Heidi, Girl of the Alps | 56.Final Yamato |
| 20.Fighting General Daimos | 57.Xabungle |
| 21.Zambot 3 | 58.Minky Momo |
| 22.Treasure Island | 59.Bryger |
| 23.Triton of the Sea | 60.Little Norse Prince |
| 24.Galaxy Express 999 (movie) | 61.Nausicaa |
| 25.Marine Express | 62.Dunbine |
| 26.Adventures of Ganba | 63.Votoms |
| 27.Babel II | 64.Baxinger |
| 28.Age of Great Dinosaurs | 65.Go Shogun: Etranger |
| 29.Daitan 3 | 66.Arion |
| 30.Space Pirate Captain Harlock | 67.Layzner |
| 31.Yamato 2 | 68.Laputa |
| 32.Getta Robo G | 69.Totoro of the Neighborhood |
| 33.Wolves in the North, Tigers in the South | 70.Kiki's Delivery Service |
| 34.Hurricane Polimar | |
| 35.Mobile Suit Gundam | |
| 36.Be Forever Yamato | |
| 37.Tekkaman | |

desirable volumes can be priced into the stratosphere. For those curious about such things, the yen price ran from a low of 480 to a high of 1800. That means that when Roman Album #1 sold in Japan, it did so for something like \$1.90. Now, you'd be lucky to find a copy for less than \$65.

Roman albums once encouraged experimentation on the part of the early fans of animation with each new release. Perhaps it is now time for a new generation to discover both the earlier shows and these marvels.





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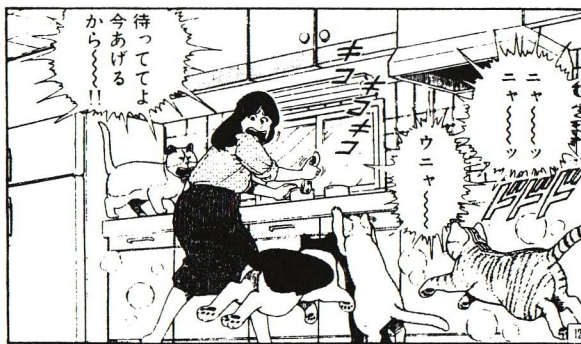
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17

4th Cat:	Nyaa! Nyaa! "Meow! Meow!"
2nd/3rd Cats:	Unyaa "Umeow"
Sound FX:	Do do do (a heavy "thump thump thump" running sound)
Sound FX:	Kiko kiko kiko (creaking sound of opening a can)
Girl:	Matte-te yo Ima ageru karaa! "Hold on. I'll give it to you right away." (PL2)
• When making a request in an informal situation (for example, asking your cats to wait), <i>kudasai</i> can be dropped, and the <i>-te</i> form of the verb (<i>matte-te</i> in this case) can be used alone. <i>Matte-(ite)</i>, as opposed to simply <i>matte</i>, has the connotation "be waiting (while something else is happening)." • <i>Ima</i> literally means "now," but can be used to indicate "right away." • Strictly speaking, <i>yaru</i> would be used (instead of <i>ageru</i>) to refer to "giving" to an animal. The use of the more "polite" word <i>ageru</i> in this situation is somewhat feminine. • The final <i>a</i> on <i>karaa</i> (because) has been elongated to show a sing-song tone of voice.	

(Plus, feature stories, Q&A column, classified ads, book reviews, etc.)

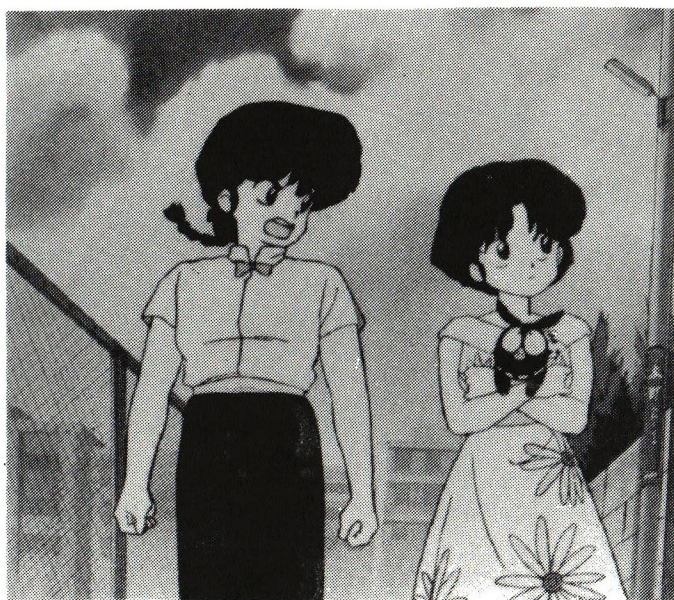
Mangajin is published 10 times a year and is available now through select comic book stores and newsstands! Ask your retailer, or send \$4.50 for sample copy to: Mangajin Sample, PO Box 10443, Atlanta, GA 30319

Top: Ranma (She).
Bottom: Ranma (He)

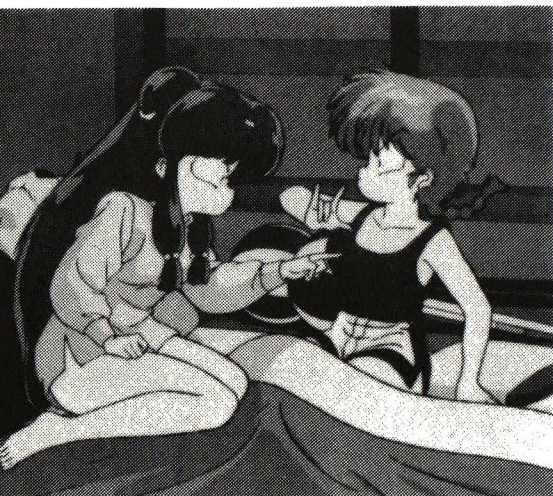


First came **Urusei Yatsura**, and that gave way to **Maison Ikkoku**. When the last episode of that ran, there was a brief silence from Rumiko Takahashi. The series that took its place was firmly back in the lunatic tradition of **Urusei**, and was named **Ranma Nibonnoichi**

RANMA 1/2



As usual, this series began as Manga (this time, in Shonen Sunday) a substantial time before the animated series. Still, its roots are further back yet; they can be found in Urusei Yatsura itself with the characters of Ryunosuke and her father. They too are constantly fighting each other: the older as the instructor and the younger simply trying to survive. The battles were rather pitched at times with the victories being more or less evenly split among them. Both use dirty tricks to their advantage (they've both been at this far too long to play fair). Also in evidence is that fact that there is a good deal of sexual ambiguity (to those hearing about this for the first time, all will be made clear in a moment) in both situations. In the case of Ryunosuke, it's because (her) father wanted a son for assorted reasons and wound up with a daughter instead. To compensate, Ryunosuke was raised as a boy.



Now, did you ever know it was going to be one of "those" days? Some time ago when Ranma Saotome (the reading of the Kanji for RANMA comes out to "War Horse", by the way) and HIS father were in China, they happened upon a remote village. At first glance, all that could be seen were a series of small pools. Having been informed by a local resident that this is a "village of Cursed Waters, they heedlessly seize on the opportunity to "spar" in a new location. Both Dad and Ranma square off at each other atop bamboo poles above numerous pools despite the frantic advice of their guide. When Dad is bested and falls into one of the pools, he emerges not quite the same as he was moments before. To put it delicately, he's now a rather substantial Panda. Their guide explains this in a matter-of-fact style that he's fallen into a pool where a Panda once met it's end, and this is the usual result. Taken aback, Ranma is momentarily distracted by father's new visage, and

subsequently takes his own dive into a different pool. Surfacing female, (she? he?) is informed that (he? she?) is currently soaking where once a girl was drowned. (She? He?) is also informed that this transformation will take place each time he (let's just call it he) is saturated with cold water. Hot water (quite hot, actually) will turn him back to his original form.

And now to the Tendo household. Mr. Tendo is an ex-martial artist who feels somehow slighted by the fact that he's fathered nothing but girls. His offspring will not be able to carry on the family tradition, but that's not the half of it. He's now faced with the task of marrying off these three. First, there is Kazumi (the oldest) who is apparently quite at home being acting mother for the family. One of the local doctors is quite in love with her, but she usually fails to notice (or even care for that matter). Next is Nabiki who is somewhat materialistic. She'll





sell out anyone or anything for a profit. Lastly, there is Akane, who is the youngest and perhaps closest to fulfilling the family tradition. She spends a large percentage of her time in the family Dojo practicing her craft (ie splitting cinder blocks, etc.). She professes to have little use for men in general.

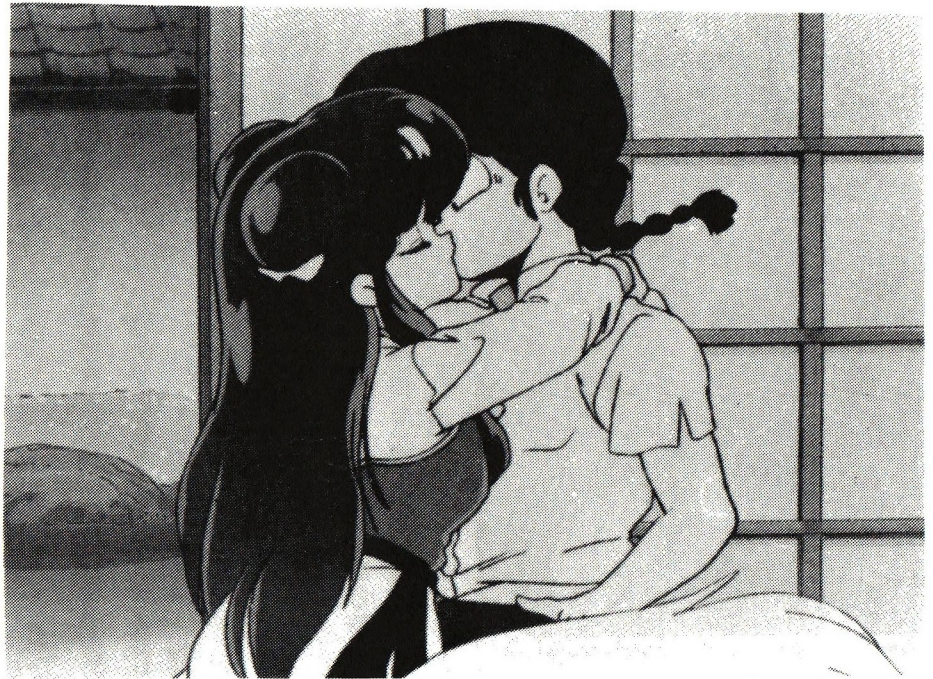
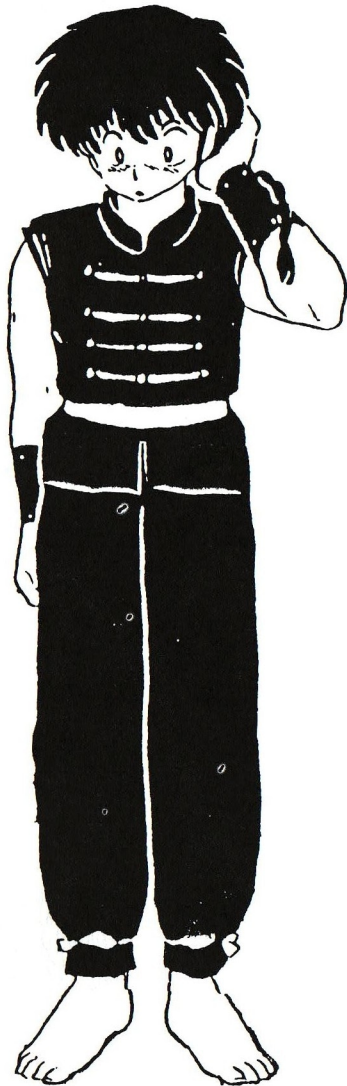
One day, all three daughters are called together and told that an old family friend who has spent the last years in China (Mr. Saotome) is arriving back in Japan bringing his offspring Ranma. They are further informed that one of them will most likely be involved in an arranged marriage to Mr. Saotome's son, Ranma (Dad is in the dark as to current events). When the giant panda arrives with a red-haired "passenger", Mr. Tendo fails to notice that Ranma (who does introduce (her) self) has changed somewhat...at least not immediately. Once Dad regains consciousness, Akane (in a surprising display of civility) challenges Ranma to a contest in the family Dojo; the winner being the one who "touches" the other first. Of course,

Ranma does this easily. Even though bested by Ranma, Akane feels a certain kinship to Ranma (another female martial artist of extreme competence). This feeling lasts until Ranma changes back to (his) original form in the bath, and Akane happens upon him. Thereafter, the relationship is stormy to say the least, but the more immediate problem is this "stranger" in the tub. Mr. Saotome takes it upon himself to both demonstrate and explain this strange turn of events. Once the whole sad story is explained to the assembled group, Mr. Tendo is not dissuaded one bit by this interesting paradox. He still wants one of his daughters gone. Seeing which way the wind is blowing, Kazumi and Nabiki decide that since they are the oldest and thus have the greatest say (besides, there's two of them) in the situation, the best candidate for betrothal is Akane. Sadly, Akane would probably consider running barefoot over razor blades before she's consider wedding "Hentai" (abnormal). Ranma compounds this by mentioning that not only isn't he interested in Akane but he's dated better



Far left: Shampoo and an unsuccessful attack, Akane (with long hair) and Nabiki.



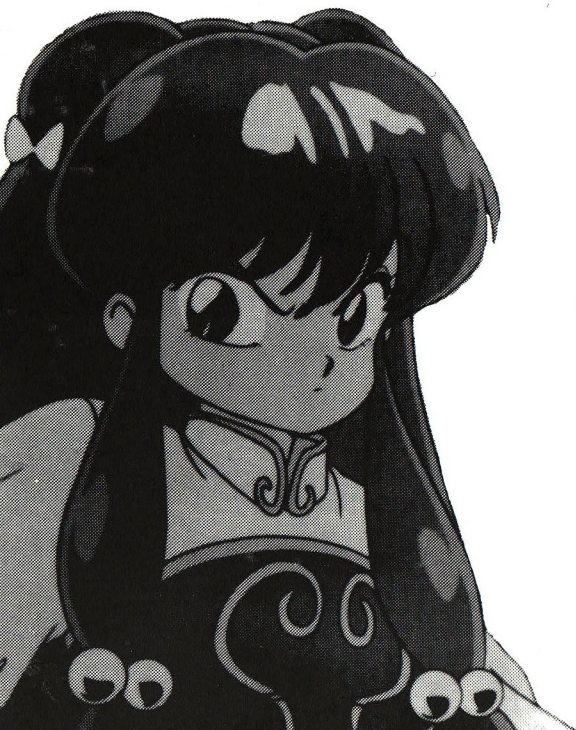


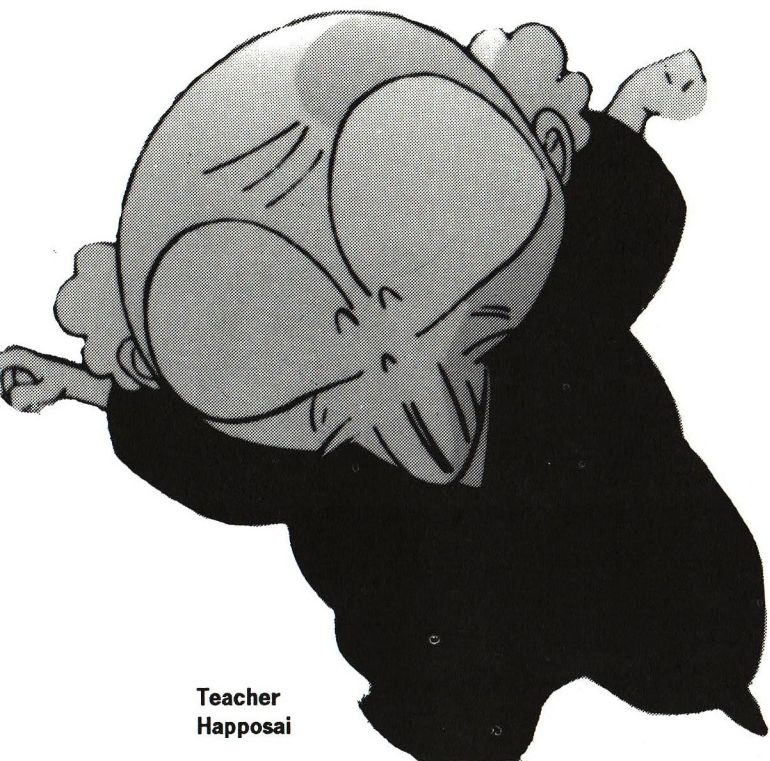
endowed females back in China. In Japan (as in America) this is grounds for getting one's face slapped, and Akane does this with a vengeance.

In the episodes that follow, the above events are more or less repeated for some time, but soon it becomes obvious that both Ranma and Akane are warming to each other. Therefore, it's time to make things difficult for them. One of the earliest complications is Sempei Kunou. This gentleman has been attacking Akane on the way to school for a considerable time, and is soundly defeated each morning at exactly 8:30. He's deeply in love with Akane, but to satisfy his machismo he must defeat her in his ritualistic battle. Only then will he admit publicly that he loves her; he will allow no other male to get close. Since he's a skilled martial artist, he possesses more than enough "muscle" to keep his cronies in line. When Kunou challenges Akane (yet again) to battle with Ranma in attendance, Ranma jumps at the chance to defend a lady. This is equivalent to

waving a red flag in front of Akane; the classic concept of Chivalry is enough to send her into convulsions. Ranma (she) defeats Kunou with remarkably little effort, and as Akane and Ranma withdraw into the distance, Kunou is once again in love (With Ranma-she). Nabiki soon realizes that Kunou is ripe for the picking, and decides to set out on a campaign to extract as much money from him as possible.

Also typical for a Takahashi series is the unrequited love story (this time around, there is more than one). In this case, it's a tiger-striped sweatbanded fellow named Ryoga. Like Ranma, he came from China, and since he too took the scenic tour of a drowning pool courtesy of Ranma he's a bit displeased with the fellow. Since each of the folks we meet in the series has a different change mode, it should come as perhaps a surprise but certainly not a shock that he changes into a small black pig. This particular form has caused Ryoga rather a predicament: in his human form, Akane won't





**Teacher
Happosai**

**Akane with P-Chan
(Ryoga).**



really give him the time of day while in his pig form, Akane just loves him to death. Ryoga is not ignorant to the effect this has just as Ranma is beginning to become interested in Akane and uses it to his advantage each night so that Akane will share her bed. While in his pig form, he's almost totally defenseless (as one might imagine), so he's careful to check his surroundings before he makes the switch. He's come close to being the main course at several meals even so.

Now, it just wouldn't be a Takahashi show if it weren't for a really unusual and uninhibited female (snicker). Here, the name is Shampoo and if you can imagine Lum with lavender hair and no horns, you've got it pretty nearly. The case of Ms. Shampoo is probably the most interesting as she is doubtless the least daunted by things like several thousand mile journeys to settle a grudge. She is also perhaps the least affected by things in her way like cement walls two feet thick (she ignores perfectly good doorways in favor of cutting her own). She

has it in for Ranma since some many years back when Ranma (she) beat Shampoo in a contest of strength and fighting ability while both were in China. Shampoo, bested by another girl, bestows on Ranma an almost emotionless kiss...the reason for which becomes apparent soon after. It's the literal kiss of Death. From almost anyone else, Ranma would be spectacularly unconcerned as Ranma is more than a match for most. When Shampoo arrives in Japan (creating new doorways in a diner), Ranma is more than slightly shaken. When Shampoo is beaten yet again by Ranma (this time in his boy form), she bestows upon (him) a kiss, but this time things are different. While she couldn't accept being beaten by another girl, being bested by a boy is just peachy and keen. In fact, she (like Hikaru in Kimagure Orange Road) quickly becomes a fixture on Ranma's arm but she's still hunting all over Japan for (the girl) Ranma. One more thing to make life interesting: Shampoo still uses the Chinese language for communication. It's a minor

thing to us (most American viewers don't even notice), but to Nabiki, Kazumi and Akane (who DON'T speak Chinese) it's rather a bother. For those of you asking the question, yes. Shampoo also changes...she turns into a harmless looking cat. Of course, Ranma cannot tolerate cats in any form (akin to Shutaro Mendo's fear of the dark), so her feline form is enough to send him screaming across town. If this wasn't enough, some time after Shampoo arrives, her mostly ex-boyfriend shows up. He, like most of the folks in this story, is more than slightly competent in the martial arts category. He too changes into another form when confronted with cold water (doesn't it seem like this cursed village is on some travel agents' list somewhere?). He's also monumentally nearsighted, but since the glasses don't look nearly cool enough for him, he usually doesn't wear them. Still, it isn't every day that one sees a duck wearing glasses. His name? Well, there is SHAMPOO, so this fellow is MOUSSE. Next case...

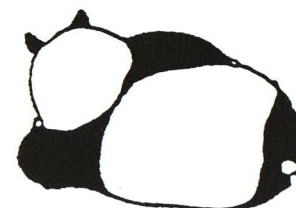


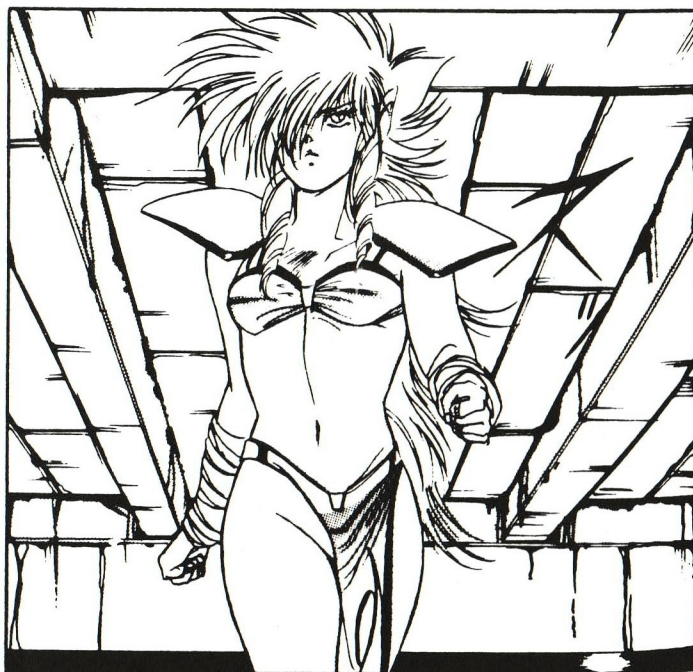
Mr Tendo (top)
Mr. Satome (bottom).



If news is to be believed, Rumiko Takahashi herself was displeased with the work that had been completed on the show prior to the twentieth episode, and since she had considerable clout with the project, a large part of the staff was changed. The new series titled more like "Ranma: Hot Fighting Action" is more of a weekly martial arts free-for-all minus the extremely skillful use of camera tricks that characterized the earlier show. The music used is still great, but somehow diminished slightly from the original. The character designs have also changed, but also only slightly. Perhaps it's just a show trying to find itself the way that Urusei Yatsura did, yet it seemed that the show had its identity pretty well down in episode one. It's still just as goofy as before, but most of the original viewers of the show agree that what is currently being run is not up to the earlier standards. Still, it's better than just about anything currently running against it.

With the manga continuing to run in Shonen Sunday, one can rest assured that new installments of the show will be some of the best "rollercoaster" action available. While many fans lament the passing of Urusei Yatsura from the weekly television forum, most feel that this newest work fulfills the Urusei legacy nicely. One thing is for certain. A typical episode of Ranma Nibunnoichi is at least as dynamic as a typical episode of Urusei Yatsura, and probably a bit more so. Just replace the tiger stripes with a Chinese tunic, and change electric shocks to a Kendo staff. No flying saucers, though.





Far left:
Vampire Princess
Miyu, Iczer One
and the
Phoenix

COOL COMICS



Japanese comics (manga) have become all the rage these days. In fact, some traditional domestic comic fans are beginning to feel threatened by the flood of new and dynamic work coming in from abroad.

Most fans will not touch something that hasn't been translated into English, but there are always a few brave souls who will take the plunge and try the original form. This isn't as odd as one might think since where domestic comics rely on the word balloons to tell the story, manga usually tells the story with descriptive pictures. Granted, there are many stories that are so intricate they require a translation but there are at least as many that do not. In addition, you can sometimes buy later volumes of a story that is in the process of being

told in English. You'll be able to impress your friends by spoiling the stories for them (not to mention becoming the oracle of knowledge of all things Japanese...).

Probably the safest way to begin a venture such as this would be to start with currently translated titles. Look up your local Japanese bookstore, decent comic shop, or patronize one of the mail-order companies and buy your first issue of manga. That's right: something you can't even read. That alone will impress half your friends. When you actually get the volume you've chosen, you'll notice that it reads from back to front (an easy way to illustrate this is to look at the BACK cover versus the FRONT cover). If you feel particularly adventurous, go to your local library and check out a book on

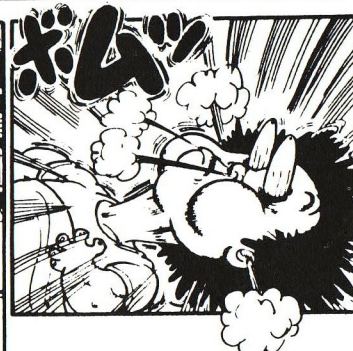
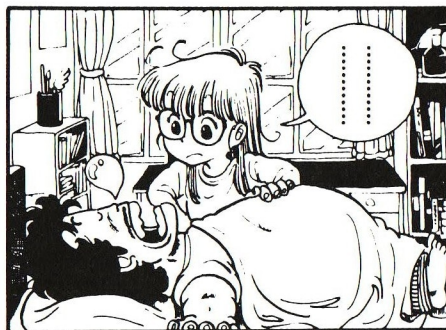
Japanese "katakana" (one of the phonetic languages: it's usually English underneath!). That way, you might just be able to get the title characters and impress the other half of your friends.

Now, **Akira** is probably the one that you'll find the easiest. It became the rallying cry for many new fans, and you can do MUCH worse than to read this one. The form that you'll encounter the Japanese issues is somewhat unusual to most American fans, but it's closer to the original Japanese issues than most. When the Japanese talk about manga, they are usually talking about one of the big weekly offerings like **Shonen Jump** or **Shonen Sunday**. These are presented in a form that resembles nothing so much as a thin telephone book printed

chicken", the adventurous ones will be well rewarded for their efforts with stories that transcend language. While his works didn't usually feature glitzy hi-tech robots and elf-eared android girls, they are fantastic nonetheless and typify an entire generation of manga.

Also worth more than a quick look are the works of **Leiji Matsumoto**. A student of Tezuka early in his career, Matsumoto created the memorable characters of **Captain Harlock** and the crew of the **Yamato**. Again, fans used the current trends in clean-lined manga and comics might turn off, but his raw energy and

Dragon Half and Dr. Slump's wake-up call.



on quite poor quality paper (usually of several different colors in each issue). This oversized format is the way that you'll find Akira.

Many people are also familiar with **Outlanders**, the title from **Johji Manabe** currently being translated in the Dark Horse comic of the same name. Right now, you can go out and buy the late issues of this, and find out just HOW things end (which is somewhat interesting to say the least). If that doesn't fill you up for now, Mr. Manabe has produced several other series like

Caravan Kidd, **Capricorn**, and **Drakuun**, and some one-shot books like **Dora**, **Key Of Graciale**, and **Powerful Mixed-Rice 1** and **2**. All of these bear a great similarity to **Outlanders**, and most of his heroines bear more than a passing resemblance to Kahn. Graciale is probably the one to look for as there is an **Outlanders** story in it that appears nowhere else.

Now, I'm going to put in the expected plug for Tezuka's **Tetsuwan Atom** (collected) and **Hi No Tori**. While many fans will just turn off when they see "Astro Boy" or "that dumb

heavily stylized forms are a treat unto themselves. He loves drawing manga about the Old West, World War II, and the far future with symbols drawn from the past.

Some folks with a bit of previous grounding in manga might be familiar with a fellow named **Shotaro Ishimori**, and his signature work, **Cyborg 009**. This is an excellent series of books, heavily in the Tezuka style, about a series of (you guessed it) nine cyborgs who fight off the evil organization (and individual) named "Black Ghost". This is an international group: 001 is

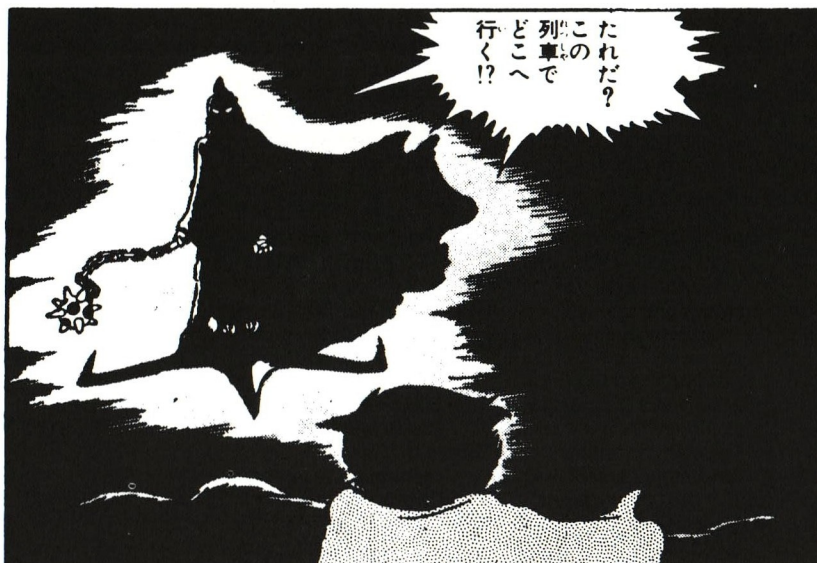
a Russian Baby, 002 is a red haired American, 003 is a French girl, 004 is a German fellow, 005 is an American Indian, 006 is a Chinese cook, 007 is an English shapeshifter (who keeps making James Bond jokes), and 008 is an African who doesn't breathe. 009 is Japanese, and the team leader (What...a...surprise). Since the original nine and their creator turn against Black Ghost early on, there are a series of new cyborgs sent out after them (numbered from 010 on up). Refreshingly, none of the cyborgs seem terribly happy about being partly mechanical. 009 constantly looks at his hands (these aren't mine), and old friends remark

at Go Nagai. His manga tends to be quite violent and sadistic (even by today's standards), usually featuring robots or evil spirits (sometimes both). Better known titles are **Devilman** and his **Mazinger Z** stories. He's also the creative mind behind the characters in **God Beast Lyger**, and **Fandora** from the tv/original tape releases of the same names. Of late, there has been a bit of a resurgence in his popularity with several older titles reprinted in a new collected form.

For those of you who like the cute-little-girls (nothing wrong with that), a title that comes to mind is the recent **Dragon Half** by Ryusuke Mita; manga



Atom,
Galaxy Express 999
and Cyborg 009



that his eyes now look "dead". What many fans do not know, however, is that Ishimori produced another storyline immediately after 009 called **009.1**. This is now collected in two oversized volumes and features yet another cyborg (009.1) who can only be described as Ishimori's version of **Cutey Honey**. She has machine guns in a most unusual (and, I would think, quite uncomfortable) location.

Speaking of Cutey Honey, anyone who is going after manga should most certainly be looking

about the offspring of dragon (female) and a dragon hunter (male). The resultant girl wanders around with big eyes, very little clothing, and a sword. Still, the style (which swings radically from the standard to something insufferably cute) can take a bit of getting used to. It's just a bit too saccharine for some. The rest will probably find it more than a bit of fun.

Even though they are unrelated in terms of who actually drew these, two titles also come to mind whose film versions were

created by Toshihiro Hirano. The first is his own signature piece, **Iczer One**. This actually is his manga and even though Iczer herself appears without her regular Iczer-suit (she spends a fair portion of the manga in the buff), the manga works even a bit better than the OVA series. There is currently only a single volume of this in release. The second title filmed by him worth looking for is **Vampire Princess Miyu**, a dark and cold work interpreted by **Usanarumi Kamino**. Her style is less moody

than the film versions, yet the pages just about turn themselves. It's frequently almost as if the pages were moving.

As you can see, there are a few metric tons of manga out there just begging to be looked at. All of these can be found in a decent Japanese bookstore if you are patient, and most can be mail-ordered. Believe me, it's worth the time. Just don't blame me if you spend most of next year's salary to pay for them.



BLUE SONNET

Masahiro Shibata's most familiar story, **Blue Sonnet**, appeared in 1982, and while it was mostly unknown in America, it appears to have had a great impact in Japan. There were at least two "image" albums of music (apparently to read the manga with) created. It was therefore only a matter of time before the manga was animated. This time, the animation took the (now familiar) form of made-for-tape releases (a series of five) each about 30 minutes long.

The story itself deals with an organization called "The Talon" which is in the process of becoming the dominant force in the underworld (real novel twist, eh?). To achieve this end, they've been experimenting with Psionic cyborg warriors. Their first creation, the RX606 prototype (Shuichi Torigai), was not entirely successful since it suffered the flaw of having feelings and emotions. With these deemed "not necessary for the function", the second attempt was devoid of those bothersome defects. She was perfect. She was called Blue Sonnet. Sonnet herself was quite Psionic when she was recruited by Talon for their ends, but would

not have achieved the incredible level that she has without the major "restructuring". This change was affected by one Dr. Milligan. Psionic people, it's later mentioned, are quite common in the world, but the ability to control that psi-talent is the rare gift. With her training complete, Sonnet is sent off the Japan.

The first installment opens with an illustration of just how powerful this cyborg is. Not only can this girl utilize telekinesis (moving objects without physical contact), she is tremendously strong and has absolute pinpoint accuracy while using that strength. After the demonstration, Dr. Milligan congratulates Sonnet on her abilities, and sends her to Japan for two reasons. The first (the pseudo-public one) is to investigate a series of unusual things going on there. The second (the real reason) is to continue the search for a person known only as "Akai Kiba" (Red Claws). This person has been occupying a great deal of Talon's energy for some time for an unknown reason. The Azumi corporation (one of Talon's many front organizations) has reason to believe that Red Claws may be in living in Japan.

Our story then shifts to Ran Komatsuzaki and her best friend Naru. Both girls attend the same school in Tokyo, and both witness the arrival of Sonnet one fine morning on the way to their (the Osuikakuin) School. Sonnet, it's discovered, is a classical pianist, a genius at math, and plays a vicious game of tennis. Her opponents remark that she's "inhuman", that she hits her marks with computer accuracy and monumental power. Ran experiences this power firsthand. As the story begins to unfold, we discover that Ran's father is dead, and that she is living under the guardianship of a fellow named Kiryu. He was a student of Professor Komatsuzaki, and currently earns his living as a journalist. Kiryu is also aware of Ran's first few Psionic experiences. He believes that Ran should talk about her power, that it should be used and not ignored. Ran feels that the power is something to be shunned, that it places her outside the group and anything that does that is evil (ed: In Japan, being part of the group really appears to be everything.). This opinion is not helping things any, however. Even Kiryu has noticed that Ran's Psionic abilities are becoming much more powerful of late. That night, Ran has a recurrent dream that causes her great distress.

The next day, Ran begins to notice that a car is following close behind, yet does not make the connection as a well secured sign comes off a building and hurtles toward her and Naru. This sign is deflected with seemingly little psi-effort by Ran. This incident does not, however, go unnoticed by a stranger who witnessed the entire occurrence complete with him noticing the occupant of the car: Blue Sonnet. Naru does remark that the sign seemed to change direction during its fall. This string of "unusual" luck follows Ran, Naru and her younger brother Wataru when they attend a auto race later on. One of the cars jumps over the safety wall, and is only stopped by a large expenditure of Psi energy by Ran. In the grandstand is Blue Sonnet, who now is certain that Ran is her target, Red Claws. She's puzzled that Ran stopped short of using all her supposed talents, but swears that nothing will stop her. While Ran herself is unhurt, the event has not been without its cost. Wataru has been injured and is losing blood. Ran tells the attending physicians that they share the same blood type, and that she'd like to give him some of hers. As the installment ends, Ran intones that she fears things will only get worse.

The second installment opens with a demonstration of the newest tank technology to an Azumi company

executive. While he is impressed with the abilities of the machines, he mentions that it cannot be imported to Japan. The Japanese government will not allow this (non concealable) type of weapon on it's soil, and states that the Psionic warrior currently in development by Dr. Milligan is the best way to achieve the company's goals. Meeting this executive at Narita airport, Sonnet is introduced, and the assembled group begins the drive home. They are shortly confronted by a marauding motorcycle gang. Sonnet is taken by the gang leader, and all looks lost until Dr. Milligan gives her a silent signal. She then proceeds to rend the gang in a most gruesome fashion. One of the executives (apparently, this was a setup to graphically demonstrate Sonnet's abilities) remarks that while he thought this would be interesting, he never thought it would be THIS interesting.

While this is going on, Kiryu is employing all his contacts to gain information on the Azumi corporation. It seems that they have been quietly pursuing the development of cyborgs for some time, and recently Dr. Milligan has been recruited into their ranks. This is highly significant since Dr. Milligan is the world expert in cyborg technology. With his help, a Psionic cyborg will be developed if state of the art biomechanics permit it.

Meanwhile, the Azumi Corporation is getting more than a little anxious over the fact that Red Claws is still free and as such still a threat to their plans. A large part of their corporate energy is now diverted to her capture. Sonnet is directed to close in on her target and neutralize her at all costs. As a means to this end, Sonnet inserts herself further into the typical school environment and is shortly attacked by a group of local bullies. These very minor league cretins are dispatched by Ran and company who conveniently happen upon this spectacle. Perceiving Sonnet as helpless (ed: boy, are these guys in the dark or what???), they take her into their group and offer her kindness. Naturally, Sonnet is unsure how to react to this as it has apparently been some time since anyone treated her as anything but property. While considering this situation in the middle of lunch, she collapses.

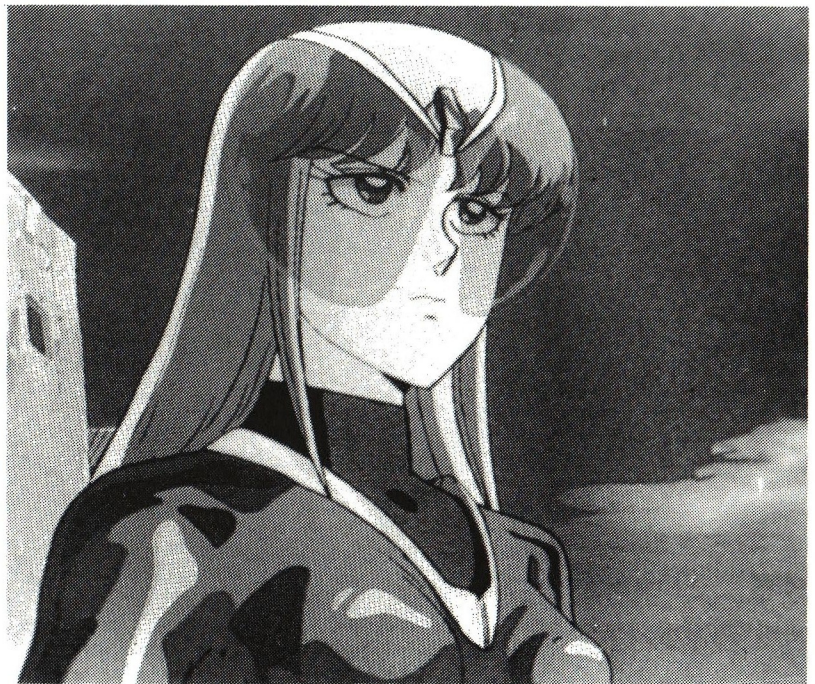
Almost instantly, Dr. Milligan lands his helicopter right on school grounds and takes possession of Sonnet's unconscious body, carrying her into the school infirmary. When the school nurse (Ms. Tsuji) offers to help, she's informed that the most help she can give is to keep everyone away while he works. With the help of a portable diagnostic computer, the doctor performs a minor modification to an "Overheated Emotional Line", and it appears that Sonnet's cover is still intact when in walks Tsuji in an effort to be of assistance. Sonnet psionically coerces her into leaving the room, and later into taking a graceful 3/4 gainer off the top of the school. As a stroke of irony, the ambulance that takes the nurse's body away was the same one called for Sonnet immediately upon her collapse.

Later that same day, we discover that Wataru has begun to exhibit Psionic power, and Ran's transfusion is suspected. It seems that while the blood types out normally, no one else on the planet has this exact chemistry. It is this highly unusual blood that is giving Ran (and now Wataru) the Psionic power that (they) experience.

Still later that same day, Ran gets a phone call from what appear to be the police. They inform her that Kiryu has been involved in an auto accident and is badly hurt. Further, she's told that a police cruiser will be by in a few minutes to pick her up. As the police drive her off, Wataru surmises that something must be up, but he's too late to

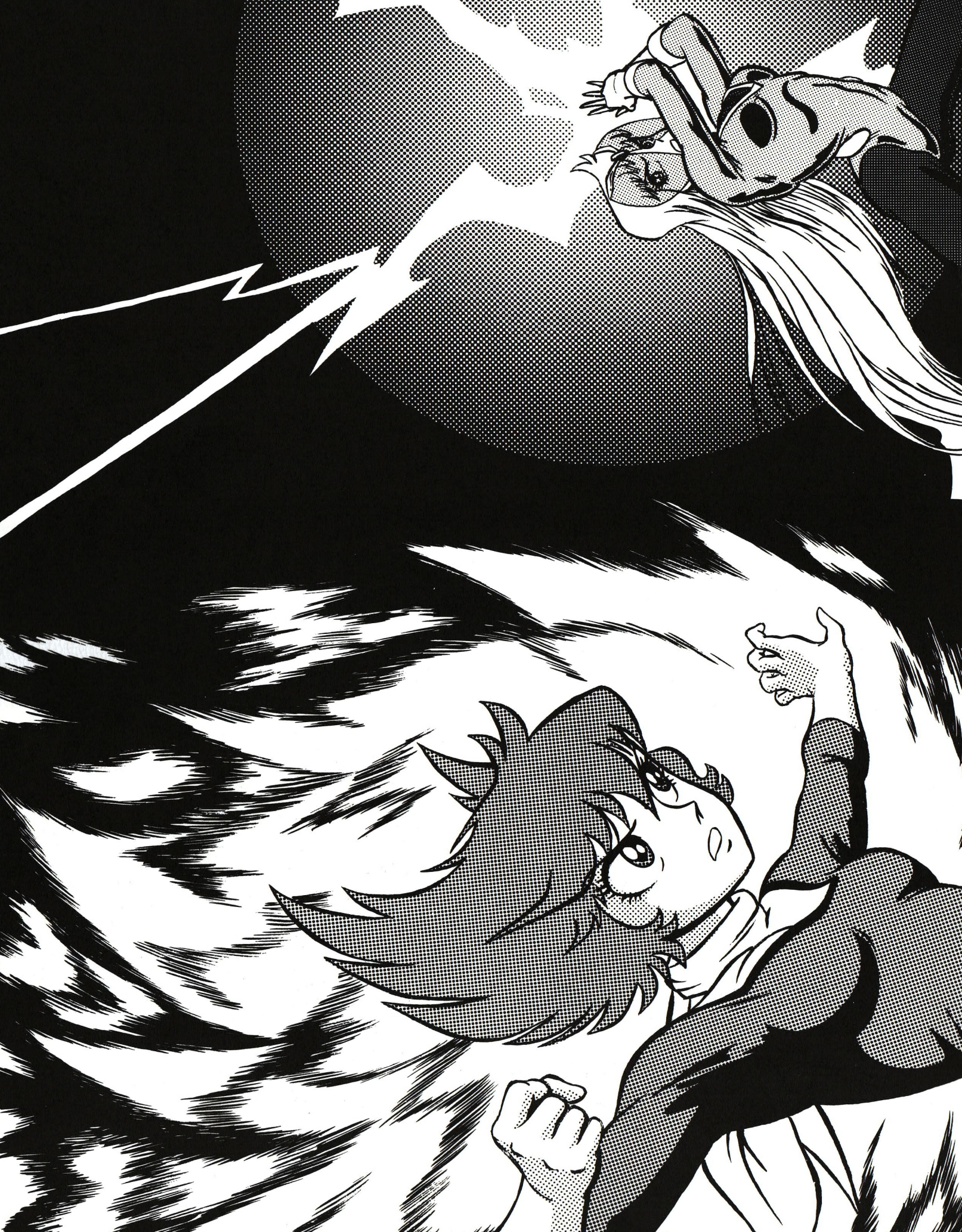
do anything about it. Ran too figures out that these guys are not police, but in the back of a moving automobile there is not a great deal that can be done. Her captors remark that they were told that they'd be transporting a monster, not a cute little girl. Their destination is a freighter moored in the middle of a harbor. Escorted deep into the ship, she's locked in a room with a wall sized viewscreen. Dr. Milligan appears on said screen momentarily and introduces the other occupant of this sealed room: a large bomb with a ten minute timer. The timer is activated. This test is a simple one: if Ran is really Red Claws, then teleportation is entirely within her ability. If she is not, then she isn't Red Claws anyway and the evidence is destroyed. Ran is watched carefully by Milligan for signs of Psionic activity while Wataru and a mysterious fellow ride with breakneck speed toward the site. Wataru's powers are steadily increasing; he's tracking her psionically.

The timer runs down quickly. Ran is doing little other than screaming and hammering the steel doors with her bare fists. "Let me see your horror" intones Milligan as the timer approaches zero. Screaming "Let me out!" as the timer hits zero, Ran achieves the emotional state necessary for Psionic activity and teleports out milliseconds before the ship explodes. "Someday" mentions the doctor "I'll really see what you can do..."



The third installment opens with the destroyed freighter on the morning news, allegedly the victim of an industrial accident. Now that Ran is surmised to be Red Claws, the Azumi corporation bristles at the fact that she's still walking free. Sonnet feels that she's failed her superiors and with her honor damaged wants another crack at her target. Since she still stands the best chance of capturing and controlling Red Claws, Sonnet is allowed to continue.

Ran, however, is getting excellent advice from Wataru's new friend. He too numbers the Azumi corporation among his enemies. His immediate advice is simple: "Don't go anywhere near home. They'll be waiting







Ran

for you there." Kiryu feels that they might stand a chance to live if Ran can control her powers, and direct them against her unknown attackers. With this in mind, an expert in paranormal phenomena is called upon.

In a quiet house, a terribly scarred fellow named Professor Onagara is introduced. He is, as you might suspect, one of the leading experts in the field, and quietly listens to Ran as she talks of her Psionic experiences. Finally, he agrees to help Ran control her psionics; he speculates that there is another person living inside Ran who has the ability to release the incredible power that she's previously demonstrated. Her first training session is downright strange...when Ran goes back to her earliest memories, she sees herself in a forest, raised by wolves and abandoned by her natural parents. Also very briefly shown is the wreckage of an airplane in a forest. "What else do you see??" Before he can explore further, Ran is pushed to her limit and the equipment is shut down. An assistant remarks "The Professor is a very stubborn man, we'll continue tomorrow."

It takes Professor Onagara about fifteen microseconds to call the Azumi corporation and fink on Ran. He's shocked that she's as psionic as she appears and that she's the strongest he's encountered in years. Apparently, he's under contract to interview and report all incidents of Psionic manifestation to Azumi in return for a fat sum. That night, Dr. Onagara's houseguests are woken by a mysterious voice. Also, the Professor's granddaughter has a vivid nightmare that everyone in the house will die. It would seem that this little girl is precognitive.

The following morning, Kiryu makes an interesting discovery by checking some drying underwear. Apparently, there is another female resident of the house that they've not been introduced to.

Different equipment is employed during Ran's next training session. This time, the attempt will be made to control the power rather than explore it's roots. "If you let

[the other person] out, she will control the powers." After a few moments of prodding by the Professor, Ran begins to release a considerable amount of psi-energy. "I can feel my sister's power" she remarks, but is totally unable to control it. The lab is trashed by the resultant backlash, and the house itself seems on the verge of collapse. As it appears that nothing will stop this demonstration, Ran hears a woman's voice call to her, telling her to wake up. Doing so, she's rather surprised to see the lab is in the condition it's in, and immediately asks where "Yuri" is. Yuri is the person who woke Ran, Yuri's voice is the one heard the previous evening, Yuri is the professor's daughter.

Yuri, it turns out, was one of the more powerful psionic people in the world. Trained by her father (the professor), she developed the ability to read minds, but inadvertently became pregnant. It would seem that she was learning other things while she learned to control her psionics. This her father would not allow, and a family battle ensued. In an effort to kill herself after the birth of her daughter (Yumi), Yuri threw herself on the fire. The flames did not kill her, but instead terribly disfigured her. This caused the professor to cease all serious exploration of paranormal activities; he apologizes to his mute, faceless daughter who still wanders through the house. "I destroyed my daughter's life." He then warns Ran and company that "The people who are chasing you are on their way here. They will be here soon." Ran reminds Professor Onagara that Yuri can read minds, and thus already knows how he feels.

As a final statement, the Professor informs Ran that he now believes that there is, in fact, no one else controlling her psionic abilities as he first suspected. Ran herself is the other person. Moments later, the first of the Azumi thugs arrive. They chide the Professor that the place is a mess; he knew they were coming and he should have cleaned up a little. One of them is carrying a helmet that is purportedly a psionic shield. Wearing it, a person's psionic abilities are squashed. As he approaches Ran, she begins to become angry, and her Psionic potential is activated once again. Building toward a squall, the powers are suddenly quenched by Sonnet who had arrived during the confusion. "You didn't think that you could have stopped her with that shield, did you?" With Ran finally captured and Kiryu in tow (he might have important information), the remaining occupants are considered unnecessary. Over the objections that Yumi has done nothing, the assembled group is brutally murdered and the house set on fire. Sonnet does not react as she had in the past during murders. This time, it appears that she's quite shaken by what she's seen. "As a Talon warrior, you don't need human emotions. You are committed to being a warrior. You shouldn't be disturbed by anything."

As the house is still burning, the stranger and Wataru arrive. They intercepted the call to the Azumi corporation, and drove to the house as quickly as they could. Pulling the corpses of Yumi and the Professor out of the fire, Wataru and his friend encounter Yuri. Yuri, tracing the Kanji in their hands, explains that Ran and Kiryu were taken away. Wataru, his psionic ability increasing by the hour, knows that at least for now Ran is unhurt, but that he must now go home.

Since the last two installments are not yet available to us out here, they cannot yet be reviewed. If we can convince the editors, we'll write something for those as soon as we can get them. Until then..

ed: Yes! Please! I've got the space if you've got the text!



THE YAMATO EXPERIENCE

Space Cruiser Yamato. There was a time not all that long ago that those words became a rallying cry around which fandom revolved. Now, since there aren't OVA's for it every week, and many of the hardcore fans have grown disgusted and moved on, you don't hear very much about it. Now, before you turn up your nose and jeer at the ship with the big hole in the front, look at the facts.

Prior to 1974, there was animation to be sure. Lots of it. Still, if you look for books on that material, you'll find that there are very few of them. The standard reference works of

early animation (Roman Albums) didn't appear yet. It took something with really huge appeal to start publications: that something was **Yamato**. **Animage** magazine, now for most of fandom the standard for information on new animation products, started with two issues whose covers were (you guessed it) **Yamato**. There are no less than 8 Roman Albums from the **Yamato** TV series or movies; that's better than 10% of the total number, and that's from a country that just adores animation. And that's just ONE side of the Pacific ocean.



Yuki with Arufon, of the invasion force in *Be Forever*.

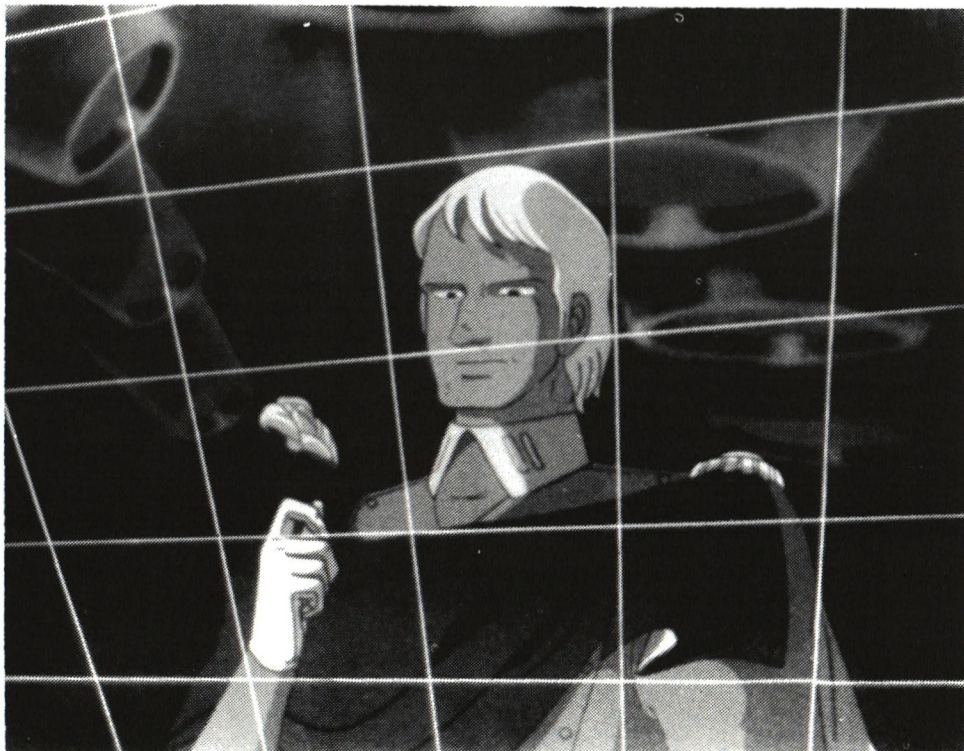
Over here, **Space Cruiser Yamato** assumed the guise of **Star Blazers** (not a great name by any means), and we all got a real infusion of the stuff around 1979. While lots of people will tell you that Tezuka started the Cartoon/Fantasy Organization with shows like **Astro Boy**, it's strange that most of the early members seemed to be **Yamato** fen. So howcum is that? Why was **Yamato** the big hit that it was? The reasons are pretty good.

This show appeared over here on many independent TV stations on a five a week basis. It was promoted a bit better than most series were. The translation was much more accurate than previous shows to make the transition from the Japanese market to the American market. The voice acting was several notches above average (always a sticking point for Japanese products). It appeared distinctly nonthreatening to the viewers. The few Japanese names shown were quite far down in the credits. Each episode has a brief recap of the previous installments so that no matter when you came in, you could follow along with the story...and what a story it was! The characters were all somewhat more than the usual (for American stuff) three dimensional. The real big reason? About the time that the series aired, vcr's were becoming commonplace. Many people who were watching the show were able to tape it with comparatively crude VHS and BETA

vcr's and thus trade missed episodes with friends. You could watch favorite episodes over and over again, and even cut out the commercials if you wanted to. We all take that for granted now, but around then this was a real innovation.

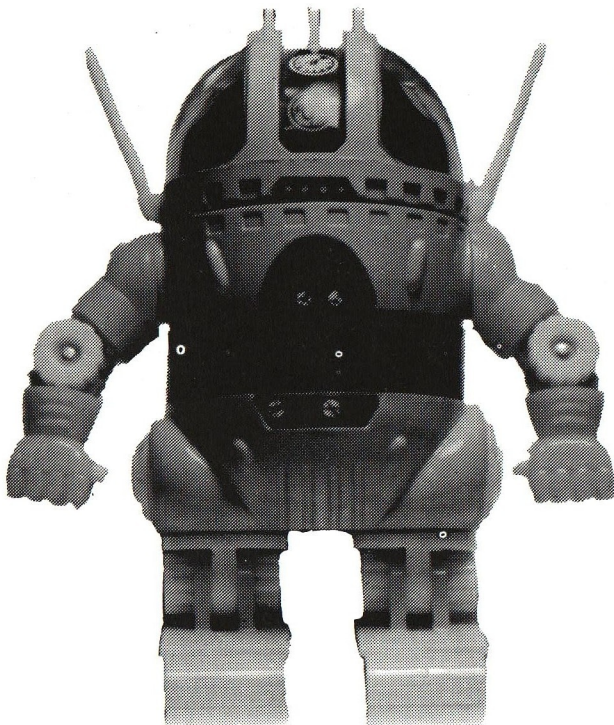
Still, the show wouldn't have caught on over here were it just for the vcr's alone. You have to have an exceptional show to just reach out and grab people through the television

Dessler, swearing to defend Yamato with his life.





Kodai and Yuki (dead)
from *Arrivederci
Yamato*.



screen. You needed the right timing for the release. In short, you needed a miracle. Toei (and Westchester Films) got one, it just wasn't when they wanted it to happen. **Yamato** was so successful that people tend to forget that it wasn't so early on. This show needed something to start it up, and it's ironic that the impetus for **Yamato** fans was **Star Wars**. The irony comes from the fact that **Star Wars** was in many ways a live-action **Yamato**, with rumor having it George Lucas spent some time in Japan previous to his project watching nothing but TV. Coincidence?

These days, the only thing that most fans can compare the phenomena to would probably be **Macross**. After the demise of **Yamato** back in 1983, there was a distinct vacuum for all of about ten minutes, and **Macross** filled it. It's interesting to speculate on what would have happened if **Macross** had come first, but history has spoken and **Yamato** kicked over the industry. Somehow, I doubt that **Macross** would have grabbed the public by the horns and had the same effect on fandom. We'll never know for sure though.

If you liked animation, you liked **Yamato** (or at least appreciated the thing). For years that was the case. I can't stress that enough. THIS show was EVERYWHERE. At least on the East Coast in the early eighties, there'd be a room at almost every SF convention showing third and fourth generation copies of the TV show or some of the movies to enraptured crowds that said nothing but drank in the programming. I can all too clearly remember seeing signs for things like "The Gamilon Embassy" on central bulletin boards that advertised things like who was in what room, who was selling what, and who was looking for a place to crash for the night. The names that ran the room were always different, but the interest was the same: **Yamato**. As people left to get some food and or sleep (note: most of the real diehard fans would do without both for a considerable time), they'd be discussing fine points of character development, or arguing over who was related to who and in what capacity. After a while, you'd see large reference works compiled by the REAL diehards that were cross-referenced with incredible care. This show became a way of life to many people, and it's disappearance has been sorely felt.

No. It doesn't have a million and a half drawings in it per scene. It didn't generally have twelve-level multiplane shots of growing forests. It didn't generally have background paintings with more than 150 different colors. It didn't have super glitzy computer-animated explosions. It had a story. A story as old as stories themselves. A simple love story compounded by the characters having to mature much earlier than they should have. Nasty villains who aren't all that nasty in love with people who couldn't care less about them. War and peace against inner war and inner peace. Spectacle. All the things that make Japanese Animation what it is. It pointed the way for others to follow and dared the competition. It made the name of Matsumoto what it was. It WAS animation.

The **Yamato** stories did follow a strict formula for the plots, but this usually did not degrade from the series or movies. For some reason or another, **Yamato** is all that stands in the way of the alien horde and time is running out for Earth. The crew is assembled, and leave their home for the last time bidding Earth a fond farewell. The mission is sure suicide, but it would be a noble death. A bit of background explaining how the ship has been rebuilt from it's last tour with much stronger alloys and improved engines. Then, the story settles down and we see the underlying loneliness that is the heart of any **Yamato** story. It's only the later installments when it became obvious that some people on staff (we won't point any fingers) became more concerned with the profit margin than the storyline that things went downhill. Still, it's not just any show that can command an audience the way that **Yamato** did for it's final installment. I still maintain that when the **Yamato** is finally done in (by it's own crew and quite deliberately if you didn't already know), it's downright painful to watch. It's somewhat like losing an old friend. I know people who CRIED when it blew itself all to kingdom come, and there aren't many shows that you can say that about...and certainly not after four previous movies and three TV series. No, **Yamato** was unique in all time and space.

So now, time moves on and people forget. The books, long since gone from retail shelves, sit on shelves lovingly preserved by the hardcore fans who all thought that \$25 wasn't too much to pay for a \$6 book. The rare copy of Roman Album #1 that is sitting on a dealers table at \$100 is joked at by some fans, but purchased by one (many of them even know better, too). It's a piece of history, you see. A time when a lot of people were first opening their eyes and finding that there really was more to Animation than just Jay Ward. A time when fans stood together and discussed, rather than in-fighting and playing political games. It's been said that we live in different times. It's only sad that **Yamato** had to be one of the casualties.

Compact Disc Review

Ever go through a catalog of Japanese soundtrack CD's? Doesn't it usually go something like "Gee...I liked the music from that, but I only remember a song or two. Was it all good? Why for a 45 minute OVA are there two or three compact discs? What's the difference between a BGM, an OST, and a Drama Special? What if I guess wrong...I don't want to blow \$30."

Granted: Music (and Art) are almost totally subjective. With that out of the way, we can all say that we've all made good musical choices and some not so good ones. While the technical quality of the vast majority of these Japanese releases is extraordinary, there are a few that are very poor indeed. There are compact discs with shocking omissions and others with undreamed of inclusions. There are compact discs with running times as short as 34 minutes, and others with times over 65 minutes with both selling for the same price. This column's purpose is to highlight some noteworthy releases and to recommend (or warn) fandom's members before a purchase decision is made.

Firstly, some definitions:

BGM: (Back-Ground Music)

The generic term for a release's music soundtrack. Originally, this distinguished them from Drama specials.

OST: (Original Sound-Track) A more recent variation on BGM. Typically includes ONLY music from the particular movie, OVA, or Television show (ie: if it is a MOVIE, don't expect music from the TV series)

BEST COLLECTION: When a series has a long run and a lot of music, not all of it will fit on one

CD. Therefore, a selection of the more popular music is put on one CD. Pot luck.

DRAMA: Just that...basically the film without the pictures. This usually includes some music and the dialogue with original voice actors.

SYMPHONY: EXACTLY that...the film/series/OVA music symphonically arranged. These can be quite strange and some are excellent.

DIGITAL TRIP: Ah, the one that sets the spinal column jangling. For fans of electronic music for it's own sake, a film/series/OVA music done on a synthesizer with little regard to the original.

HIT COLLECTIONS: Beware of these...they lurk under many different names. They CAN be only "cover" versions of the original tracks done by different artists that bear little resemblance to the originals. If you'd like a collection, make SURE it's the original arrangement and artist.

AAD: Analog-Analog-Digital. Original tapes, original mix-down, digital conversion. The books says that these are the worst sounding.

ADD: Analog-Digital-Digital. New mixdown from the original session tapes. These are the vast majority

DDD: Digital-Digital-Digital. Totally digital process, theoretically these are the best sounding. Very few of these. Oh yes, before you say that you'd never buy a \$30 cd, remember that most Japanese soundtrack lp's are in the vicinity of \$20-\$25 each, and unlike their silver cousins, lp's DO wear out.

THE REVIEWS: Ratings based on 0-4 scale



Symphonic Suite "Captain Harlock"
Columbia: 32C35-7667 (3200Y) 8 tracks: 48m 10s
Totally subjective rating: 3.00

This is a truly amazing compact disc. The performances, while not the originals, do not pretend to be. This must have been released around 1979-80, yet the recording has excellent dynamic range and remarkably little background noise. As typical for the period, Harlock's music was primarily orchestral originally, so this does not sound out of place in the least. The program material on this CD is the television series music exclusively, but does not include the opening or closing credit music. This is not a rock soundtrack, but if you give it a chance, you'll probably find yourself liking it despite some slow spots. I only wish the liner notes were better.



Memorial Songs Collection #4:Space Pirate "Captain Harlock"
Columbia: CC-4193 (2800Y) 17 tracks: 63m 29s
Totally subjective rating: 3.25

The 3 1/4 rating above is given with a bit of reservation. While this has to be the most complete collection of Harlock music anywhere, there are things in this soundtrack that rouse suspicion. It's much too clean, for one. If these are, in fact as I suspect, re-performed, the performances are some of the best fakes I've ever encountered. This compact disc features not only music from the original television series, but also the opener and closer from Endless Road SSX (the second television series) and music from My Youth in Arcadia (the feature length movie). Quite a bit of stuff for comparatively little money.



Kimagure Orange Road: Sound Color 1
Futureland: LD32-5049 (3200Y) 15 tracks: 38m 01s
Totally subjective rating: 2.75

There are some great tracks on this one to be sure, but it tends to drag more than once. Both the original opening and closing credits are intact with a bit more material than is played on television, but the closing track is placed on the cd in the middle (track 8). This was obviously done for an lp release (it would be at the end of the first side or the start of the second), yet it's location here is a mystery. Still, this is more popular than things like Harlock because of it's primarily rock. This isn't one to put in the car CD player...take the tracks you want and put them on a cassette tape instead.

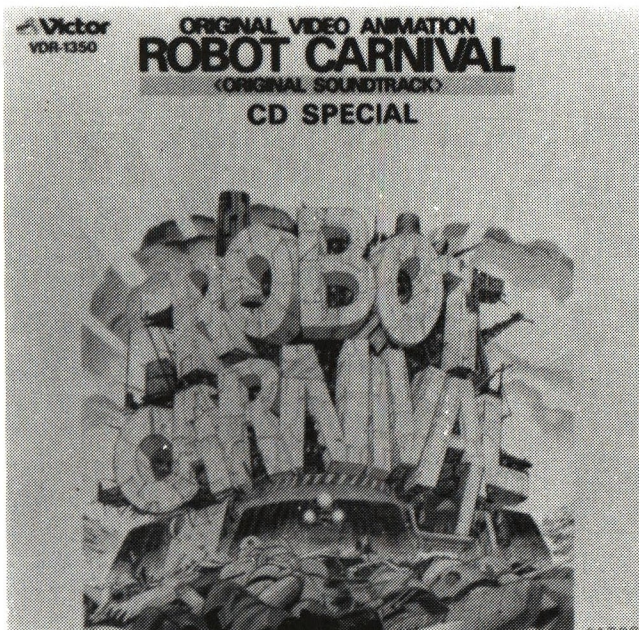


Kimagure Orange Road: Sound Color 2
Futureland: LD32-5056 (3200Y) 16 tracks: 46m 09s
Totally subjective rating: 3.00

With more of an eye on completeness and sequence than the first, this second package includes the second set of opening and closing credit music. It also goes so far as to include the "eyecatch" music...that's the snippet the announces a commercial is about to begin. Also on this cd is the song from the "Bobsen" concert that Hikaru and Kyosuke attend (track 12). While this release contains basically the same amount of "slow" tracks, they are much less noticable due to their sequencing, that is, less noticable unless those are the ones you're after. This one has a bit of music for everyone.

Robot Carnival OST: CD Special Victor: VDR-1350 (3200Y)
22 tracks: 69m 13s Totally subjective rating: 2.25

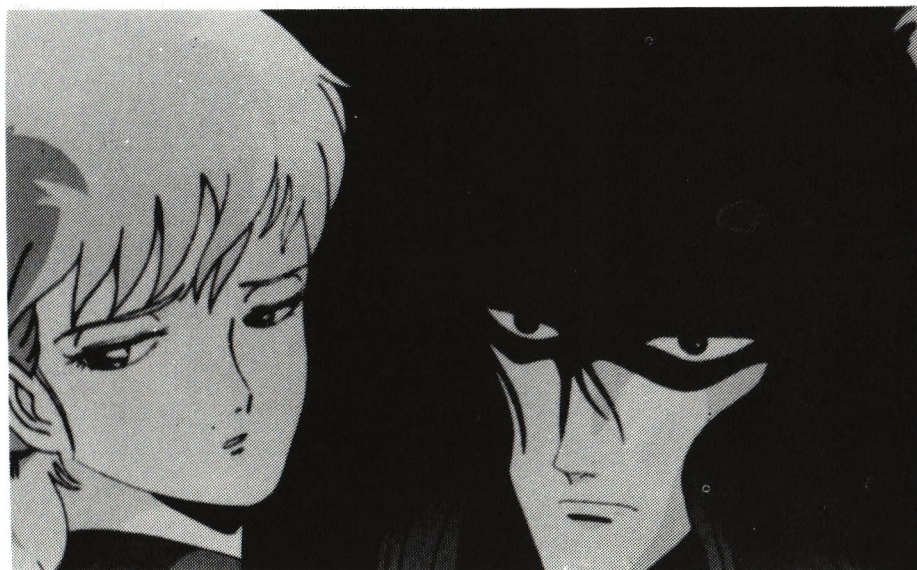
This is a truly annoying release. You are given more than an hour of music from one of the most innovative films to come around. This film features some great music, and while there is quite a bit of it on this cd, it is not anywhere near complete. The best track from "A conversation of two civilisations in the Meiji period" is not here, but a lesser one (almost inaudible during the film) is included. While we can't say for sure, it appears that the amount of background noise on the original master is covered by simply eliminating high frequencies on some tracks. The result is something that is frequently flat and dead. Still, the music that is relatively intact makes up for this to some degree. All the music from the "Presence" segment is here (4 sections). "Heart in Hand" and "Merry-go-round" from "Starlight Angel" are typically clean recordings. This is a classic story of what should have been. Were it better recorded, it would have been pushing near 4.00.



Ranma Nibunnoichi BGM Pony/Canyon: D27G1003 (3200Y?)
17 tracks: 46m 40s Totally subjective rating: 3.25

It's psuedo-Chinese Japanese technopop. This package (the first of two so far) is less concerned with conventional length music and more with presenting the listener with everything recorded for the tv series up to that point. This is less like a traditional cd and more like an archive for neat stuff. To aid in finding all the little segments that are frequently only 45 seconds long, the disc is indexed (yes, you can use those buttons on the player). The original opening and closing credit music is included, but at the time this was recorded "Equal Romance" was not being used. A pity, but that closer seems to have fallen through the cracks and not yet surfaced on a CD. Perhaps in time we'll see it. Very good with lots of quirky, strange, and downright weird music.





VAMPIRE HUNTER D

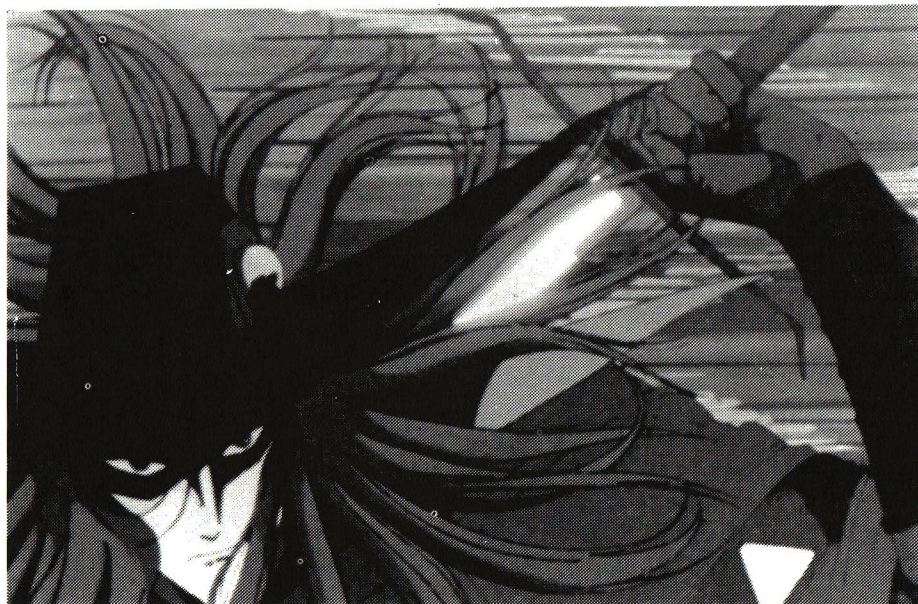


Doris with Vampire Hunter D and Rei (left).

The howling wind and the scent of Death scours the land. The population, oblivious to the land destroying itself, goes on about it's day to day existence 10,000 years after the end of the Christian era. Now people share the world with horrible mutants, a world of magic and immortality. It is a world where technology exists side by side with sorcery. A land of Vampirism. Magical creatures of every description litter the countryside, some so powerful that they have attendant servants. There are rulers so bored that humans are considered fair game. There are those who help those who cannot help themselves. There are hunters. There is "D".

The daughter of a well to do family, Doris defends her domain from marauding animals using her hunting abilities, technology, and her faithful horse. The animal is killed by one of the fruit-plundering creatures, but as Doris is involved with obliterating it with an energy gun, the horse's body is removed by a wolf. A wolf with intelligence...he removes the cross from Doris' neck. Now unprotected, the Count arrives amid a fanfare of lightning and thunder. Vainly, Doris fires repeatedly into the demon. The shots have no effect; the creature screens itself with no effort expended. Her fate is sealed. The demon strikes.

The legend says that one bitten by the vampire (ed: interestingly, the Romanian legend about the not-dead clearly says that one cannot be bitten unless the victim secretly WANTS to be) must one day fall under it's spell and become another of the walking undead. When the traveller approaches, Doris challenges him. Her assaults blunted, he passes. Confidant that the stranger has the strength to defeat the Count, Doris enlists his aid over the objections of the



townspeople. The stage is set. A bloody confrontation of Demons, Vampires, Witches and a few undefinable creatures is assured. Such is Vampire Hunter "D".

This film is a curious mix of the ancient vampire legends with a liberal dose of science and technology. It is not at all in the vein (no pun intended) of the work of Hayao Miyazaki (where high technology and backward cultures mix), but has an identity all its own. Much of this identity comes from the character designs of Yoshitaki Amano, a man who attended the last WORLDCON in

Boston. Even unrelated work has the appearance of the other-worldly, and work created for Vampire Hunter D (akin to that of H.R. Giger) reeks of worlds and times far divorced from our own. Two forces of immeasurable strength clashing against the backdrop of a crumbling Earth. Each fights for his own reasons, and only one can emerge victorious and alive (more or less). The world presented is totally believable, yet completely fantastic and alien. The illusion is perfect, and the film as a whole works where so many of its peers fall flat. There are wheels within wheels, conflicts within

conflicts. Late in the film, Doris surmises D's true nature, yet offers both her virginity and her blood to him. With great inner strength, he refuses her. "D" not only fights the Count, the townspeople, and his own nature, but also a symbiotic being residing at the end of his left arm.

Most of all, this is a film about the character of "D" himself. He is a mark of strength, of steel hardened in the cruelest way possible. He is a "dampire"; half human and half vampire. This means that while he is tremendously capable of virtually any task he undertakes, he is still

mortal (although certainly tougher than a cockroach to kill). Since his "father" is actually the Count Dracula, has certainly lived the equivalent of many human lives. While this has added considerably to his strength, his (unlike the Count's) is not a limitless resource.

There is also one other interesting storytelling device used. The film speaks volumes about the nobility of the vampire families. This facet of the legends is not usually employed by contemporary film makers, but is used to great effect in this telling. Ramika (a member of the Count's court) is enraged that Doris is selected to be one of the Count's "wives". While Doris' family is one of the most powerful in the village, it scarcely merits a offhanded remark compared to their own. When Ramika finds that she too is a "dampire", it is too much for her to take.

This film ends without an ending proper, and this is perhaps it's only real failing. "D", eyes glowing blue (the first time we've seen them do this) rides off into the glowing sun, and out of Doris' life forever as his purpose is now done. There are, it's assumed, many other vampire families and blights upon the land, and D's job is (naturally) not yet finished. He is, after all, "alive" after a fashion.

MIMI MAIL



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Dear Fellas,

I enjoyed your first issue of ANIMENOMINOUS very much, especially the piece on **Orange Road**. However, though not normally a nit-picker I'm afraid I'm gonna have to respond to a segment in your article "Girls with Guns".

On page five specifically mention was made of Iczer One and how odd it seemed that everyone of the invading race Coultwolf (ed: Cutowolf) were all women with the probability that the Heroine Iczer One being a male in actuality. Granted, as so with the article's writer I vaguely recall any guy ever looking that good in a tight pink jumpsuit. Although seeing a few in stories such as **Five Star Stories** it could very well be just that way.

Trust me, guys....., whatever the reliable source was saying it was a guy is very much in the wrong; either that or I'm gonna have to retake my anatomy course again.

If you know anyone that has the original soundtrack to the three separate acts of **Iczer-one** (not in disc but records) take a look at what was included in the albums. The various posters are great but my favorite is the cheesecake-style of Iczer One in [the] album for act two. Again.....this is not a guy.

Like I said, I enjoyed the first issue and will look forward to the next one. But please, you shouldn't scare us poor anime fans like that again.

Nathan Ewing
Rogersville, TN

ED: This is such a good one, I forwarded it to the person who wrote that segment. I too thought it strange when I ran across that piece, but I too heard that rumor about the question of sex in regard to Iczer. I turn you over to Roger Davis...

RD: The point in question is one of alien construct physiology. There is absolutely NO reason in this or any other world why an alien girl SHOULD look like a girl...perhaps girls look like boys, boys look like girls, or maybe girls really look like a cluster of mushrooms.

Granted: Iczer One CERTAINLY looks like a human female. So does Iczer Two. Besides the one reference to "Onnei-San" (sister) in Part Two, we've no real reference point. My source went into great detail about the only obvious difference between the sexes with these constructs was one of PSI-power. In that, I'd say that Iczer One was most likely female as Iczer Two seemed much stronger. Hmm...maybe it's Iczer Two that's male??

I included the reference because it's certainly food for thought, and it was certain to raise debate. Thanks for the feedback!

Dear Sir(s):

I'm writing to congratulate you on your new magazine. It covers a lot of things that other comic magazines don't. I loved the cover picture, but your print on the inside left much to be desired. I was especially impressed with the info about Lum. I hope you get some more scoop on this.

A lot of the movies you mentioned in your magazine I have not had the pleasure of seeing as Japanese movies are very, very hard to come by in the United States.

Regina Williams
Philadelphia, PA

ed: For this issue, we've found a printer who is quite a bit more competent than the guys who did our first one. Hang in there; we're still improving!

The crew at Animenominous,

There has been a terrible mistake... Someone has produced an anime related magazine that is worth reading. How could this have happened?

Girls with guns... I think this sums up about half of my anime collection. **Project A-ko, Dominion, Gall Force, Bubblegum Crisis, Leda**; all quite enjoyable, yet often, if not always, overlooked by other magazines.

Orange Road. I know it's popular in Japan with Madoka reaching the #1 for the most popular anime character, but how come it's taken this long for someone to write an article on it? Once again congratulations on doing something worth while.

Tiger stripes. The rest of my anime collection consists of Takahashi's anime. It took me at least two years to even find out who this green haired girl was, and I was actively looking!! I saw her picture in various model books, but no one in America saw fit to divulge anything about her. I knew no Japanese at this point, but have since learnt enough to be able to follow some of what is going on. I was rather amazed to find out how much **Urusei Yatsura** stuff was actually produced. I have since collected as much as I could. I have recently moved onto **Ranma 1/2**, something else that has largely been ignored by the "major" U.S. anime mags.

I am glad to say that half of your magazine was not wasted on endless and boring plot synopsis of **Aura Battler Dunbine**, or that other major waste of space, **Gundam**. Sure, some people may like it, but so far magazines have been so obsessed with it, that coverage of other anime has been choked out. And no **Dirty Pair** either. Sure, I have some on tape, but it's not that great, and as it has already been covered extensively by two other magazines, it's old news.

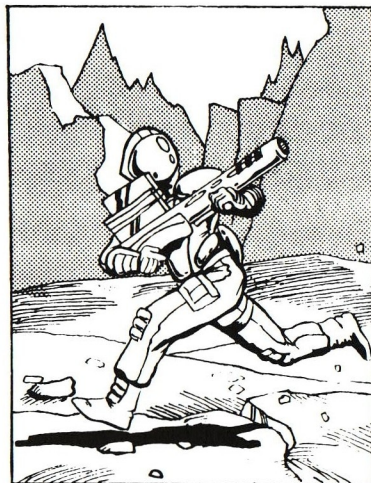
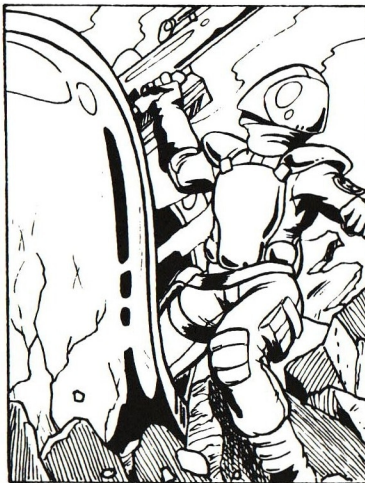
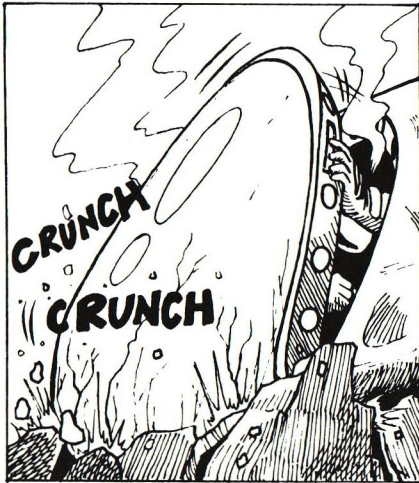
Down here in Australia, animation is hard to get. There are no anime fan shops. The best we have is a comic shop that occasionally gets in an anime related item. A lot of my stuff I've had to buy from the U.S. (mostly from Nikaku Animart). The TV standards are different, too (ed: they use the PAL format while the US and Japan use NTSC), so I've had to buy an American TV, Laserdisc player, and Video Machine. Down here you're either into animation in a big way, or not at all due to these barriers.

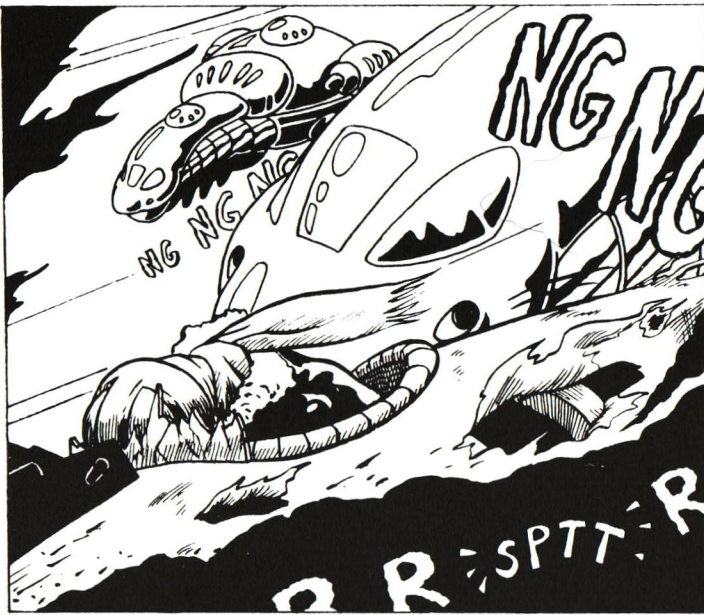
Great effort. I wish you success.
Ken Stone
Victoria, Australia

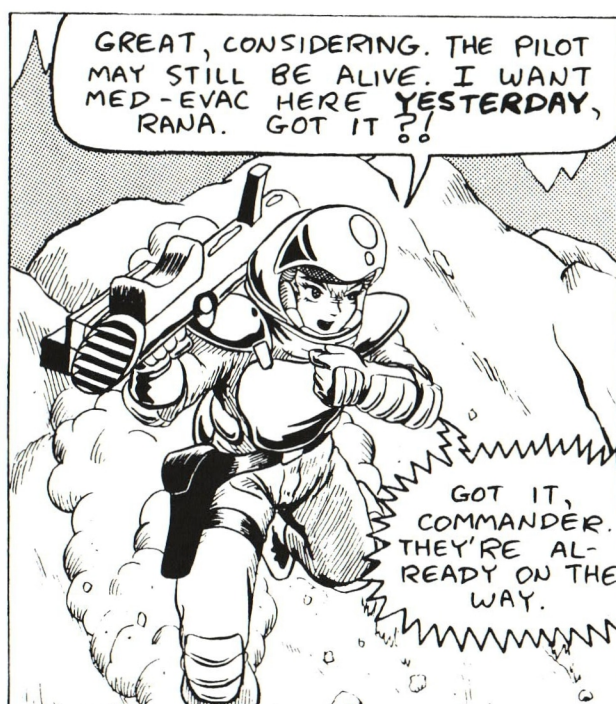
OUR STORY SO FAR:
RUPERT VOLSUNG, A YOUNG FLYING ACE OF IMPERIAL GERMANY, IS REPRIMANDED FOR CONTEMPT OF HIS SUPERIOR OFFICERS AND THE ARMY IN GENERAL, AND ORDERED TO FLY DOUBLE DUTY; IN OTHER WORDS, SENTENCED TO DEATH. ON THAT SAME DAY, THE ALLIES ATTACK ST. MIHIEL WITH OVERWHELMING FORCE, AND RUPERT'S **JASTA** (SQUADRON) IS INVOLVED IN THE FIGHTING. AFTER SEEING HIS BEST FRIEND, HEINRICH, SHOT TO PIECES, RUPERT FACES COUNTLESS ALLIED PLANES ALONE. HOPELESSLY OUTGUNNED, HE FLEES THE BATTLE HOTLY PURSUED BY THE ENEMY, HE SEEKS TO LOSE THEM BY FLYING INTO A GATHERING STORM. LOSING CONTROL OF HIS AIRCRAFT, RUPERT IS DRAWN UP INTO A STRANGE VORTEX...

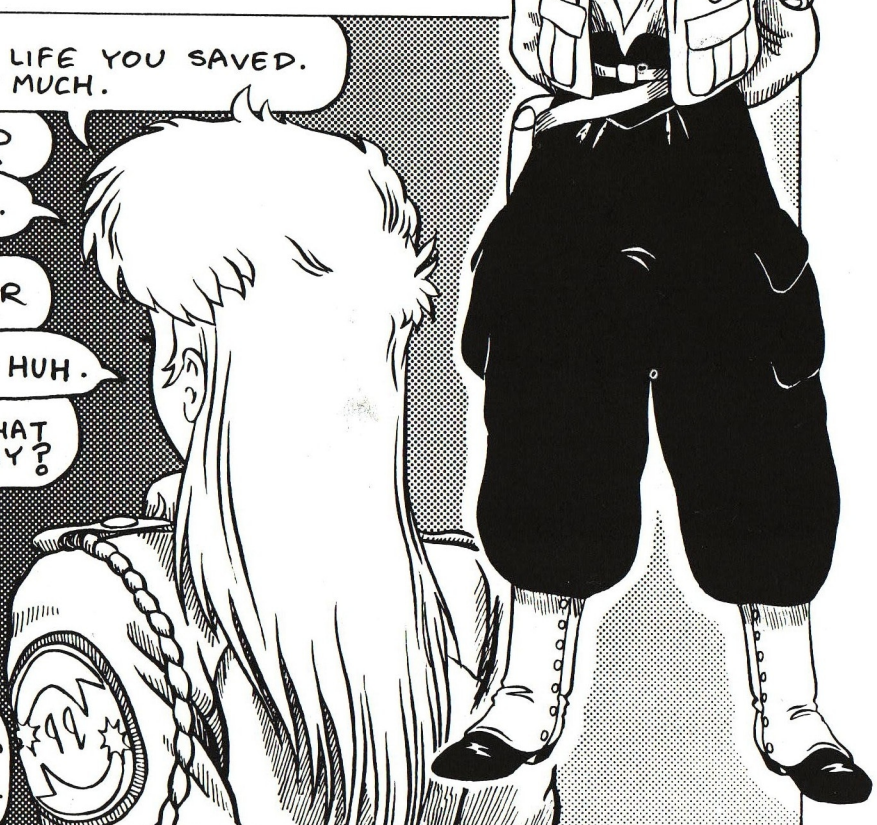
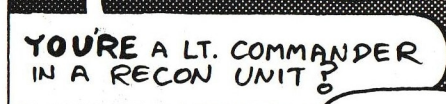
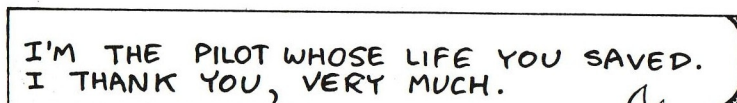
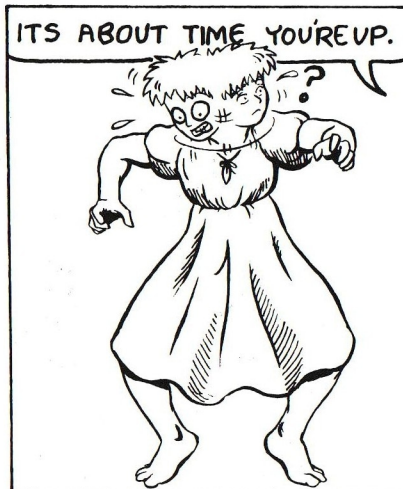
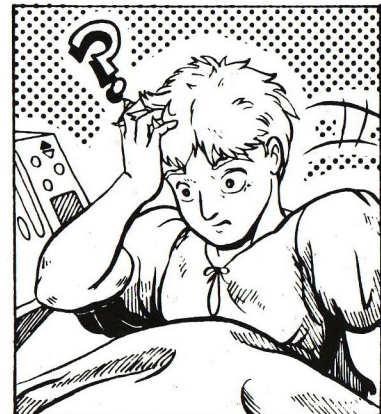
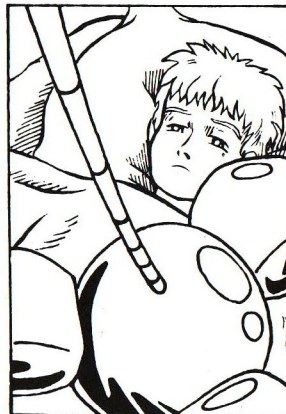
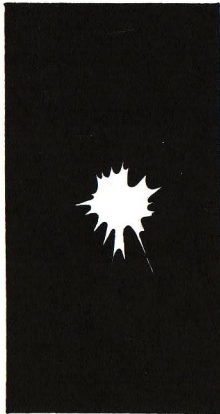


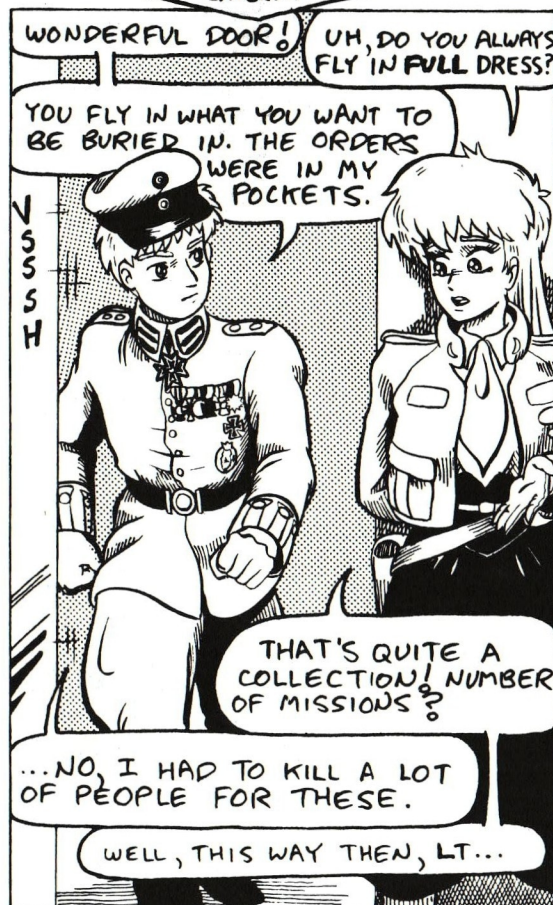
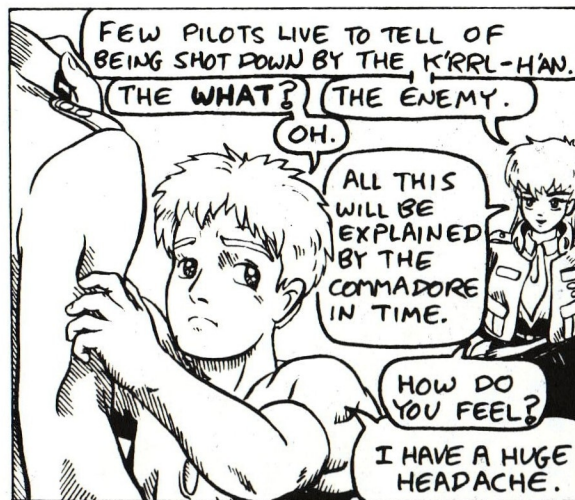
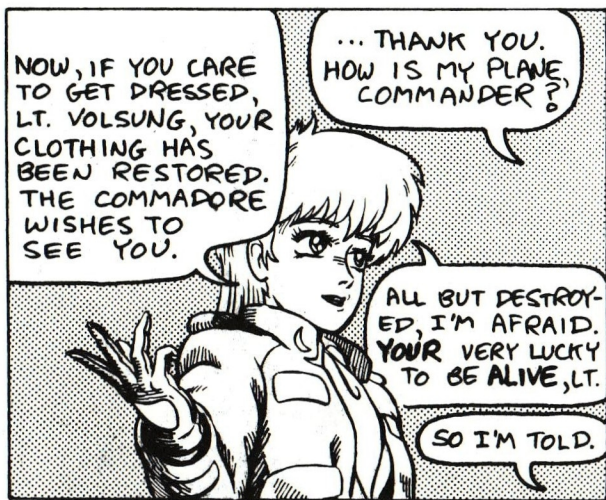












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